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T H E

Conformist's Third Plea

F O R T H E


Nonconformists.

Argued from the King's Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs ;

Grounded upon the approved Doctrine,

A N D

Confirmed by the Authorities of many Eminent Fathers and Writers of the Church of *England*.



By the Author of the two former P L E A S.

Lord Bishop of Cork's Protestant Peace-maker, Pag. 128.

To those who ask, What need of more Union? I return, What need of more Holiness? What need of Godliness, Charity, Justice? Are these Christian Duties? and is not Union and Peace as much so? — I am, and must be in the mind, that the Strength of the Protestant Cause, both here at home, and throughout Christendom lies in the Union of Protestants; and the Glory, Purity and Power of Christianity, in this World stands or falls with Protestantism.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. D. for Jonathan Robinson, at the Golden Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard, M DC LXXX II.

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FOR THE

Nonconformists.

tion concerning Ecclesiastical

213A

Grounded upon the approved Doctrine

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Author of the two former P. L. A. S.

York's Protestant Peace-maker, p. 12.

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A PREFACE to the Christian and Peaceable Reader, that seeks the things that be of Christ.

A Zeal for Peace and Union hath overcome all Discouragements arising from many Causes, and inspired me to a Boldness prevailing against much Fear, even to publish the secret Workings of my Heart. As long as the Church dare shew her Face, my Notions are not afraid of the Light; they can receive no Luster from my Name: let them go forth in that Light and Power, which the Father of Lights, and the God of Peace hath given, and shall give unto them; and if they may but give any Light to discover the way of Peace, let me not only ly in Obscurity, which I love, because fittest for me, but be disgraced by them, who speak all manner of Evil of me. If I have not forsaken, and betrayed the Truth, I have not forsaken nor betrayed the Church; and when you come to see the Weapons which I handle, and the Leaders and Authorities which I follow, in the following Treatise, as well as the Cause for which I plead, I hope you will be convinced, that as far as I have pleaded for the Nonconformist Brethren, I have not run from my Colours. There is common Truth, a large and spacious ground to take them in, and to build up one and the same Fabrick upon it, comfortable to all true Christians, receptive of all the Family of God, and impregnable against all their and our Enemies. It is some Relief and Comfort to see many lift up their Feet, i. e. come and view the Desolations of the Church of Christ among us; to be affected with them, and some in whom is an excellent Spirit, are contriving to bring the separate Apartments under one Roof, and within one Line and Wall. And these do stand upon the Rock of Evangelical Principles, when not supported by the Arm of Flesh: But no sooner do Arbitrators move for a Reconciliation, but others do all they can to thrust them from them, without respect to their Persons, or due Reverence to Truth and Reason. He that interposeth in this Difference, doth at the Peril of Opposition. The R. Rev. Author of the first Naked Truth, hath found this true; though his Quality and Person were more than guest at, yet the Episcopal Staff could not bear off the Lashes of several Junior Writers from the Back of Naked Truth. But Truth, be it never so naked, can bear Blows and Lashes, as it hath always born the Violence of Storms and Times: Truth cannot long be confined within Doors, but will appear in open view, whatever its Entertainment be, whether Scorns, Contradictions, Laughter, and Mockery, Abuses, and Scourgings, or Approbation and Honour. The Appearance of such a Book as that Naked Truth, at such a time, was like a Comet, it drew the Eyes of all that could look upon it; it was a Divine Manifestation of a Primitive Christian-Spirit of Love. And certainly, as that pious Endeavour hath increased

his Comforts, so he hath not lost all his Labour; for since that, we have had more Overtures of Peace, than we heard of in the many Years of Discord and Troubles, from the Learned in the Church of England. The Nonconformists have born all the Blame, and Scorn, and Sufferings of our Divisions; and have offered as much towards Peace and Accommodation as was possible for them to offer. But partly their Writings, and the doleful State of Religion, have drawn out some Wishes and Concessions from some Men of Eminency in the Church, towards Peace and Accommodation. And tho these as yet seem too little, yet there is much to be gathered from them; first, as to their Propensity to Peace.

2. The Influence which their Concessions may have upon a sterner Temper.
 3. Because they being satisfied in the Point of Conformity, as to their own Practice, do yet for a greater Good and Peace incline to a Comprimise. The Learned Dean of St. Paul's hath, with submission to Authority, made some Proposals; and I hope would yield to more, if the Composure were put into his hand. Even Dr. Sherlock, who is curiously thought to have written

the Defence of Dr. Stillingfleet, doth wish with all his Heart, that some Expressions were altered, to prevent any Scandal to the scrupulous, or to the profane; this he writes only for the Office of Burial of the Dead, which he calls an excellent Office, supposing the due Exercise of Church-Discipline, to cast all notorious Sinners and Schismatics out of the Communion of the Church, which the Church supposeth to be done. I am of

his Mind, concerning the Excellency of that Office; It is most comfortable to the Minister, and most Comfort to all true Christians, when we can use it upon good Evidences concerning the Dead. But as the visiting of the Sick hath been too often to me, the most uncomfortable Office of my Ministry; so it hath been a great Addition of Sorrow, to commit those Bodies to the Earth, concerning whom I had no hope of their resting in Christ. O what dejecting Stories could I write of too many! but I forbear. If he be so sensible of the ill use which may be made of that excellent Office, and do so heartily wish, that some Expressions were altered to prevent Scandal to the scrupulous and profane; methinks for the same Reasons he might wish more Alterations might be made, in other things, and Offices. Most frank and generous are those Expressions of the Right Reverend and

Protestant-Peace-maker, p. 29. Pious Bishop of Cork; 'We are ready to sacrifice all we can otherwise (i. e. without Schism) to the publick Peace and Safety; what most of the Dissenters would be at (no Liturgy, no Episcopacy, no Uniformity) may not be, cannot be without Schism, p. 32. The only Steps by which we can mutually move to Peace, I with all submission conceive to be these. That we all would seriously study Self-denial, and that with a peculiar Eye and regard to Accommodation; one perhaps of Popularity, another of a particular Honour, another of something else. All of whatsoever good Conscience tells us is best valuable

valuable than common Union; p. 33. — But notwithstanding, what I have said of the Excellency, both of the Common-Prayers, and of Cathedral Performances, I do conceive the Alteration of an Expression, or here and there of a whole Prayer or two by Law, or dispensing with some Ceremonies in loco — I do not conceive such Relaxation as this would break the Harmony and Beauty of our Worship, or disturb the Union and Peace of our Church. There are some Collects, and perhaps some Rubricks too, which with all duty and submission I humbly conceive might be altered for the better. pag. 118, 119. This honourable Ambassador of Peace speaks home, and from his heart, and shall for ever sit high in the esteem of all the Sons of Peace. Here are Propositions (conditional indeed, with the consent of Authority, as they should be) that will certainly be embraced by Dissenters. But now, if the Church should condescend, (if I may call that a Condescension which is done for Christ?) as far as it can without Schism; and the Dissenters as far as they can with a good Conscience: What shall be done if they cannot come up to a full and perfect closure? Shall the Dissenter have no benefit by his Consent to the great things? and the greatest number of things (in which they agree already) shall he be not only excluded, but punished, altho he continue peaceable in his Dissent? In such a case, here is an apparent Necessity of mutual Forbearance in Love, and of the Bond of Peace, to keep in the Unity of the Spirit. And here I cannot without a great respect to another Conformist of Worth and Quality, (as I am informed) repeat the Words, which are like a healing Plaster to a heart bruised between our grating Differences. The way to make National Religion most National, is by comprehending all the Differences that can be reconciled with true Religion; while they that dissent in some things, receive one another with a good, peaceable, holy and publick Temper of Mind; as the great Argument and Inducement of which, we should all pray for the Acceptance of the holy Service of all that call on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (as the Apostle distinguishes Christians, but immediately unites them again) both theirs and ours; they and we, whatever smaller Distinctions make the [They] and the [We] are both one in our Lord Jesus Christ: We ought to pray for the common Benefit of all so united, though not bound up in the same common Form with us, for a gracious Audience and Reception of their and our Worship of God, that so the Spirit of Love and Union in the main, may convey all our Services into one before God, where indeed (if they are as he requires) they meet stripped of all their outward Circumstances, Form and Ceremony: Faith and Obedience being alone able to mount thither with them. And Services so raised, can by no means be spared for small Differences in a National Religious Interest; for the Angels of all such, behold the Face of our Father in Heaven. Thus that excellent Person, who writes The whole Duty of himself a Minister of the Catholick Church as it is of Nations, p. 61. National in England.

The Preface.

The same Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation breaths forth in peaceable Discourses of true Protestant Christian Gentlemen of excellent Learning, and hearty Concernment for their and our Religion, taking several ways. The Learned Sir Thomas Overbury hath proposed many Questions of great Weight, and discoursed upon them piously and smartly. Sir John Mallet hath drawn up the Contents that might be Heads of useful and necessary Discourses for Gentleness towards Protestant Dissenters, tho he himself and Family come duely to Church-Service and Sacraments, and use some of the Common-Prayers in his Family. The

Letter to the Author of the Guide to the English Juries, printed after it.

Author of the Appendix to Mr. Hunt's Argument, hath discovered a good Will to Peace and Accommodation:

But most fully and of set-purpose a very learned and true Christian Gentleman, that holds constant Communion with the Church of England, hath turned aside, answering the Title of his Book, like a good Samaritan, to help up a bleeding Church, and pour a Composition of choice Reparations, to heal her Wounds. But alas! have not, and do not our Sins separate between us and our God? Oh! how are they increased, that make that Separation! O! how hot are they against a Separation that is both curable and tolerable in comparison of theirs! If their Assemblies, if their Exercises were called seditious, and Twenty Pounds upon the Houses of their Assemblies, and but 5 s. upon every one that communicates in their Sins, it would be more pleasing to God, and more for the Establishment and Prosperity of the Kingdom, than their Prosecutions of Dissenters in point of Ceremony: many of these consult, keep their Meetings sedulously, concur unanimously, and lay Spies in wait to apprehend the Preachers of the Word of Salvation. These breath out Threatnings, and what they will do! But if this chance to fall into any of their Hands, I will present one

Casp. Peucer, Historia Carcerum, Part 2. pag. 773.

warning more, and a notable Example to them, William Lantgrave of Halle, made Intercession with Augustus the Elector of Saxony, for Dr. Peucer, Prisoner a long time, for his dissent in the Ubiquitarian Controversy. The Elector promised his release, if Anne his Duchess would be willing, and desired him to try her first: she replied according to her Obstinacy, If she lived, he should not be released. Which Answer of hers, the Lantgrave, and other wise Men, did thus interpret, That the Duchess should shortly dy, that Peucer by her Death might be released; and so it proved, according to their Interpretation, she died, saith Dr. Peucer, in that very moment, in which I dreamed in my Sleep, of a great and noble Funeral, and a Bell ringing, and as the Bell-rope brake, that Verse of the Psalm came into my Mind, Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler; the Snare is broken, and we are escaped. And among what Prodigies, she died, is known to all.

I am confident, if the Persecutors of our peaceable and religious Nonconform-
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miss were studious to prepare for Death, they would forbear this Work; and as it is dreadful for any of them to dy in their Sins, unrepented of, and to dy in this Sin, so let them take heed, that some of the greatest of them do not fall by an apparent Hand of God. I do profess if I had any Friend engaged in this horrid Work, I would perswade him, if possible, to forbear, if he had any regard to his Soul, to his Life, to his Family and Posterity; if any true Loyalty to his Sovereign, if kindness to the Church and Country; for this is a fighting against God, a walking contrary to him; and what can they expect but that God should walk contrary to them? Well, we read, Blessed are they that are persecuted for Righteousness sake, for any part of Righteousness and Religion, but there's none for them that persecute. Blessed are they who say to heart the doleful State of the Protestant Religion, that consult her Peace, and that appear for her Peace in this day of her Fear and Trouble. When others are pronouncing Wo to themselves, and Wo to others; these will find Peace in their own Souls, who have studied the Peace of the Church, by healing her Breaches. If any should say to the first movers of this Work now in hand, as Olivarius the Chancellor of France, when in great Terrors, said to the Cardinal of Lorrain: Ah, ah, Cardinalis, tu nos omnes in aeternum exitium trahis: it will be no allay of Horrors, nor relief to Conscience, if any Divine or Confessor shall say, as the Cardinal did to him; You are tempted of the unclean Spirit, persist in the Faith. To this fearful Story, I will add the words of that Historian, Hec est merces Judicium quibus Aulicæ Gratix fumus, sua Conscientia potior est: He might have added, & omnium, and of all that prefer Court-Favour, which is but Smoak, to the Light and Peace of their own Consciences. The Sufferers are much to be pitied; the divided Body of Christ is more to be pitied, but they who stretch out their Hands to vex the religious and truly pious Sufferers, are both to be feared and pitied; because it is a more fearful thing for them to fall into the Hands of the living God, than for them, who religiously fear God, to fall into their Hands. To put an end to the Sufferings of true Protestants in a Protestant Kingdom, and to prevent an apprehended and feared Desolation, good Mens Thoughts are at work, and several Proposals for Accommodation are made publick. And I wonder at the Providence of God, that when too many are extream busy with Hands and Tongues to tear us into more and new Distractions, others, and they Members of the Church-Communion, appear as strongly prepared to receive the Ejected. What this Providence may speak, I will not be so bold as to interpret, but it raiseth up some hopes, when we are dejected under the dejecting Apprehensions of considering Men. It is manifest, that most that are engaged in suppressing the Non-conformists, read little, consider as little, it is but vain to write for their sakes; and those that read a little of much that is said, are strongly pre-engaged, or are afraid, or covetous to save themselves, or carried by some other Affection

Parcl. Mellis. HIR.
Part 3. p. 343. Edit. 4.
Anno 1631.

and

and Temptation, and that which is most fearful of all, are under a strong Delusion. If we were not under some degrees of a Delusion, it were impossible that Men should be so impolitic, and irreligious. I am grieved, and ashamed to read how Gundamor did delude a great, wise, and Protestant Kingdome (in his Account of his Embassy to the Council in Spain) in two great Instances of his Craft, pernicious to our Church and State. 1. A Parliament, said Gundamor! nay, therein lies one of the principal Services I have done, in working such a dislike between the King and the lower House, by the Endeavour of that honourable, and admirable Engine, a sure Servant to us — as the King will never endure a Parliament again. 2. For Religion, as Bancroft, who maintained a dangerous Schism between our Seculars and the Jesuits —; this taught me, as it did Barne-

Our of a M. S. that lay in the Study of a Loyal Divine, related to the Earl of Strafford, printed by Mr. Rich. Dugdale, 1679, and by T. S. (Mr. Scot, in his *Vix Populi*), printed An. 1624.

vel in the low Countries, to work secretly and insensibly between the Conformist and the Nonconformist —. He brag'd he had the Head of Sir W. Raleigh at command; got Dr. Everard of St. Martin's silenced, and Dr. Whiting, and Mr. Clayton, for preaching against them; and that Mr. Ward of Ipswich did not escape, for his Picture of 88. He advised the Jesuits, who consulted in Fetter-Lane, (and had a Printing-Press at a Goldsmith's House) to sow Dissention between the Prince and People. How warmly do some accomplish the Advice of Contzen the Jesuit, to bring in Popery? Rule 3. The Doctors and leading Pastors must be put out, if it may be, all at once, if not, by degrees. R. 8. Let the People be told, the Ministers are heady, obstinate Men; that they are faulty, and have deserved to be put out. R. 6. To bring in Popery, is to make use of the Protestant Contentions. R. 7. To forbid the Protestants privately or publicly to assemble together. 8. To proceed to the Severity of Laws and Punishments —. But now many are so imposed upon, as tho they did not believe what they cannot but believe; and as if they believed what they have no reason to suspect. O that many both of our Preachers and Prosecutors would diligently read and consider that excellent Sermon of our renowned Father Bishop Jewel, on Mat. 9. Pray the Lord of the Harvest that he would send Labourers into his Harvest. Take a few Gleaning of it: 'O lift up your Eyes and consider how the 'Hearts of your Brethren ly wast without Instruction, without Knowledge, without the Food of Life, without the Comfort of God's Word! Such a Misery as 'was never seen among Heathens. The Turks have Preachers sufficient for their 'People —, the Jews have their Teachers, &c. The Christians when they 'lived under Tyrants —, never lack'd Ministers to instruct them. It is therefore most lamentable, that Christians living under a Christian Prince, in the 'Peace and Liberty of the Gospel, should lack learned Ministers to teach them: 'This is the greatest Plague that God sends upon a People: contrary-wise, the 'greatest Blessing any People can receive at God's Hands, is to have Prophets

and Preachers —. But when God taketh away his Ministers which should preach Peace and open to the People the Will of God, and make known his Judgments, it is a Token that God is highly displeased with his People, &c. I may be blamed for this Quotation, as if it were scandalous to the Government, a popular delusion of People to Discontent: Yes, I know what may be said; but let the doleful, dark, famishing Condition of multitudes of Places in this Kingdom be view'd; and it is true, that People perish for want of Knowledge. I have known where one pitiful Curate (Journey-man indeed) that could make but a poor shift to saw the Liturgy and Psalms between him and the Clerk, hath been all that three great Congregations had had, unless a Stranger had preached to two of them in one day. The want of Maintenance is very great in all Parts of the Kingdom; but the want of Ministers, of sound, convincing, plain, edifying, faithful Ministers, is exceeding great, and far greater. I cannot but pity, and speak of what I know, by good report, such hath been the hunger and want of Spiritual Bread in large Places, that poor Souls that go constantly to Common-Prayer, have crowded into the Prayers, and charitable Preaching, or Exhortations of a Nonconformist. O how painfully have I seen poor Souls travel on foot several Miles to hear a profitable Sermon from some Conformist! Nonconformity and Conformity is a Mystery to poor Souls; they can waive the Distinction, for their Profit and Edification. Good Preaching is as scarce as Gold in many poor Countries, and more precious: Poor Souls are never the better for some Ministers, and a great deal the worse for others; some have not, and care not for the Study of the great Gift of Preaching to Conversion and Salvation; some may do better than they do, but will not, tho they may; and many others that can and would, may not. O what the State of millions of precious Souls in the mean time! I know London, and other great Places, have plenty of that, as of other Rarities: but if the Scarcity of Countries were but known, and laid to heart, methinks we should not stand so strictly upon Terms, and I am certain, should send out all we can find into the Harvest, rather than silence, and keep out one, or what is much worse, than send the Servants of God, his Stewards, to dig and beg, to set the veriest Catch-Poles upon Earth, the Lions, the absurd and unreasonable Men, that have not so much Faith as Devils have, to watch for them to arrest them; first, leisurely to undo them, and afterwards to apprehend them, and cast them into Prison: To stop the Mouths of able and faithful Preachers, and to imprison them for their Labours, is to let Hell loose in a Nation; and to stop the way to Heaven against many Souls. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! O England, England! Behold, I send you Prophets and wise Men, and Scribes: some of them you shall persecute from City to City. A Breach in a human mutable Conformity, will be found more tolerable, than a Breach upon a Protestant Church, upon a Kingdom's Peace and Prosperity —. Latimer followed Ridley to the Stake; but now if Latimer go first, it shall not

be long before Ridley follow. To prevent the apprehended Desolation, and Land-Flood, where the Channel is too strait and narrow; let all that have the Royalty of the River open the Channel wider, that the Ship may have room to turn her in, and the Violence of the Stream abate, by enlarging the Banks; and let there be an Harbour and a Fort built for the shatter'd Ships: And let me be excused for my good Will, if not thanked for my Invention: I see other wise Contrivances laid by, and some amended, let mine be so too. I do humbly conceive that the Reverend Mr. Baxter hath given great Evidences of a rare Head and Spirit, in the second Part of the Way of Concord, and deserves great Thanks; Mr. Corbet hath written like a wise and excellent Man; Reverend Mr. Humphrey's Peaceable Design, is much observed and respected, and his Defects supplied, by the most worthy Gentleman, the Samaritan, and Exceptions made against him with Amendments, but with great respect by the Excellent and Good Bishop of Cork: In comparison of these Men, I am but as a poor Fellow that plies his Bucket to quench the Fire, while the more skilful ply their invented Engines; or as one that brings Earth in a Basket, or a Barrow, while others draw the Lines, and lay the Plat-form. Here I conceive two things must come into Consideration.

1. What's to be done.

2. What are the Terms of Admittance, and Continuance in the holy Ministry, to be allowed and established by Law.

1. In the first, there are two things comprehended, 1. Substance and Worship; 2. Ceremony and Form.

The Debates are principally for and against Forms and Ceremonies. For both, I make bold to say;

1. There is great Reason why a singular regard ought to be had, and given to the King's Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, for the Wisdom, Moderation, and Comprehensiveness of it; and because, if ever such a thing may come to be offered, we may hope for the Royal Approbation of what may be offered out of it, of which he seem'd so fond, when he promised it.

2. It is clear, that Cathedrals must not be touch'd, neither Revenues, nor Ceremonies, let them enjoy both, and allow unto others a Liberty in another kind, while they may enjoy theirs, without mutual and uncharitable Censures and Contentions.

3. It is clear, there must be a Liturgy; and very many, even to Dr. Sherlock, mention some Alterations in the several Parts of it, as desirable and advisable, without any positive Arrogance in a Matter of this Nature. I do offer my Observation, Some that expect much Profit by Preaching, do think first and second Service too long, and tiresome: Others that care less for Preaching, are very busy in the Interlocutory Parts of the Service, grow careless, and too often prate (and stare about and whisper) in the Lessons, and sleep under our Sermons; both are too long for them also. And in some Congregations, there are,

I believe, as many, if not more, Service-Books, than Bibles, which, under Correction, is too little honour for the Bible. All that I will suggest in this last Case is, 1. That the second Service, or Communion-Service, may be then only read, when there is a Communion, or when there is no Sermon. Except the reading the Commandments be frequently enjoined; or, that it may be left at liberty to read either first, or second, or what parts of both may best suit with particular Occasions and Assemblies. 2. That only one of the three Creeds be used at one time, in the same Service. 3. The so often repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the same Service may be limited. All cannot, most do not keep Curats; the work of Reading the ordinary first and second Service, besides incidental Offices, as Baptisms, Churchings, &c. make it very expensive to most Mens strength and spirits, and wearisome to the People: and the constant necessary work of Preaching and Catechising is hardly endured by the young and healthful, but impossible to be performed by the infirm and aged. It is true indeed, if a Man's Conscience will bear it, and the People have no more need, a Minister may be both short, and seldom in the Pulpit; but then it is with two great Hazards: First, of losing his Auditory, or of his Auditories great loss to their Souls. If we did consider the Copiousness of our Work, the frequent Repetitions, Ingeminations, and Enforcements of many great and necessary Arguments, the Succession and Growth of young Ones, and all these of several Capacities, if Preaching be at all necessary to the Instruction, Conversion, Correction, Direction, Consolation, and Salvation of precious Souls, it may not be intermitted without far greater loss than a Masters Absence from his School, or a careful Father, Mother, or Steward, from the Household. This humble Proposal for omitting the second Service, hath a fair Countenance from the Rubricks. There is a Supposition, that the Communion is celebrated every Lord's day (but it is not, except in some few Cathedrals) as appears by some Rubricks; Rubr. the last, immediately before the Lord's Prayer, is this; 'The Table at the Communion-time, having a fair white Linnen Cloth upon it, shall stand in the Body of the Church, or in the Chancel, where Morning and Evening Prayer are appointed to be said: and the Priest standing at the North-side of the Table, shall say the Lord's-Prayer, with the Collect following, the People kneeling. Now I query, Whether the Priest be bound to read that Service, but standing at the North-side of the Table, so placed, so covered, to answer the Title of the Service, which is, The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion: And the Rubricks that follow speak altogether in relation to the Communion; the Rubrick after the Commandments is, 'Then shall follow one of these two Collects for the King, the Priest standing as before, and saying, 'Let us pray — The Rubrick, after the Nicene Creed, doth suppose the Communion to be celebrated every Lord's-day; or else we omit to declare Holy-days, Banns, &c. There is a great Inconsistency in that Clause of that Rubrick, and then if occasion be, shall notice be given of the Communion: when the former

Rubricks suppose there is one then. The Rubrick before the Prayer for the whole State of Christ's Church is, And when there is a Communion, the Priest shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine, as he shall think sufficient: After which done, the Priest shall say, Let us pray for the whole State of Christ's Church. I know there is a Rubrick after the Communion Service, that appoints what shall be read, when there is no Communion: which makes a Communion-Service, without a Communion.

Thus much in general for the Things to be done.

The second Thing is the Terms of Admission to the Administration. For this one plain Rule may be sufficient, taken out of the Form of Ordination: That which is a sufficient Condition, or requisite for Ordination and Admission to the Office, is sufficient for the Administration. Or that which is sufficient to make a Man a Minister, is enough to entitle him to the Exercise of his Ministry, except he apostatize, and lose what he seem'd to have. The Person to be ordained or admitted is first to be tried and examined. The Qualifications to be tried are his Calling, and his Qualifications, or fitness for the Office, by the Holy Ghost.

The Qualifications for Learning are (low enough, and were high enough, if not too high, for the greatest Number at our first Reformation) learned in the Latin Tongue, and sufficiently instructed in the holy Scripture. The Bishop doth admonish him, that presents any One to the Office, to present such as be apt and meet for their Learning and Godly Conversation: and if there be no impediment or notable Crime objected by the Congregation, he is admitted, upon his taking the Oath of Supremacy, and answering to the Questions; I. That he doth trust that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take his Office. II. Truly called according to the Will of Christ. III. That he doth unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. IV. That he will diligently read the same unto the People, where he shall be appointed to serve. V. That he will apply all his Diligence to fashion his Life according to the Doctrine of Christ. VI. Reverently to obey his Ordinary. Over and above these Answers, he that is to be ordained Priest, declares VIIly, that he is persuaded, that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrines required of necessity for eternal Salvation through Faith in Jesus Christ, and hath so determined by God's Grace out of the said Scriptures, to instruct the People committed to his Charge, and to teach nothing as necessary to Salvation, but what may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures. VIII. That he will give faithful Diligence always to minister the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ, as the Lord commanded. IX. That he will banish all erroneous and strange Doctrines; use publick and private Monitions, to the Sick and Whole. X. That he will be diligent in reading the Scriptures, and in Studies, laying aside the Study of the World and Flesh. XI. Frame his Life, and the Life of his Family, according to the Doctrine of Christ, and be Examples to the Flock.

XII. That

XII. That he will maintain and promote *Quietness, Peace and Love* among all Christian People, especially his charge. XIII. That he will obey his Ordinary, and chief Ministers, to whom is committed the Charge and Government over them.

Now I do suppose that Subscriptions will be required of all Admitted; and the last Promise will be most scrupled. Of this some Non-Conformists declare their Readiness to obey the Bishops, as Officers under the King, as supreme Governour; and is also proposed by others. For the Subscription, (which is but some kind of Security, especially in doubtful and controverted Things)

See Mr. Humphr. Matter for Union.
And the Samaritan.

Matter of Subscription.

Query, If for Peace sake it may not be sufficient, if, after due Examination of their Qualifications, and Calling by the Holy Ghost, that they declare and subscribe their unfeigned Belief of all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; that they contain all Doctrine required of necessity for eternal Salvation, and that they will instruct the People, committed to their Charge, (or any other, to whom they may occasionally preach) and teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal Salvation, but that which they may be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the holy Scripture; and that they will diligently and faithfully perform all Parts of their Office, and order their own Conversations, and of their Families, (if they have any, or when they shall have) according to the Doctrine of Christ?

We see upon what Terms Ministers are ordained; What more should be required of them, as Ministers, but a Discharge of their Ministry, according to their Trust, with Knowledge, Diligence and Fidelity? If a Magistrate, or any other Officer, be made, he may execute his Office, without any After-Restrictions.

If Subscription to the Articles be still required, for Satisfaction of forreign Churches concerning our Doctrine and Faith, ut certius inde constet omnium Ecclesiarum concentus, as Calvin wrote to the Protector: and as a boundary to our selves, for Peace sake, as some would have our Articles to be; the Number of them are lessen'd in some Proposals, and expedients thought upon, for the Relief of such, as scruple to subscribe, without a fair Exposition, agreeable to the Articles, and Analogy of Faith, as in the Bill of Comprehension.

The Ceremonies being either abolished, or left at liberty, according to the King's Declaration, the Subscription, now required by the Canon, ceaseth; and such as this above mention'd may take place, which is taken out of the Book of Ordination. If it be objected, That this large Subscription is too lax, Socinians and Hereticks may creep in, notwithstanding this. Answ. So they will, and so they may, and so they have, notwithstanding the present Subscription, or any other, in what term almost forever. But their Orthodoxy may be tried upon Examination, and certified by such as know them personally, and that Evil may be

prevented, or remedied when it is divulged: Why shall others be pressed beyond what they can clearly consent unto, for the sake of them that will subscribe to any thing?

By binding them to other, and much scrupled Subscriptions, according to the Canons and new Declarations (except that against Transubstantiation, which is a point of Faith, and not to be omitted) we see many are un-made in effect, who had been made Ministers before. This that is said, is not to the Prejudice of their orderly legal Entrance into Cures, by Officers appointed, nor all that may be said.

This, and whatever else, I have thought of, is from a holy Desire of reconciling Differences, of universal Union, if possible (but that being morally impossible) then of a brotherly peaceable Forbearance, which is a great Duty of the Gospel; and for a Cessation of the great Troubles of our Brethren, which is of pernicious Operation, and will reach further than themselves. And if it might be considered, that Union and Forbearance are of greater Moment, and more clearly revealed and enjoyed, than the things that disunite us, it might abate our Rigors, and heal our Divisions. It is true, Obedience to Magistrates is a clear and necessary Duty, but it is restrained to things antecedently lawful, and practicable: But when the Lawfulness of the things are debated, the refusal of Obedience, contains no Guilt of Rebellion; the Magistrates Power, to require Obedience in lawful things is not gain-said, but the things required are rationally doubted of. And when things are urged principally upon the reason of Authority, it is clear there is little or nothing in the things themselves to commend them to our Observation. And the Magistrate saves his Authority, and is as much obey'd as need be, by making a new Law, that takes off the Obligation of the old, or leaves things indifferent, in their Indifference, as much as by an Obedience to the old.

But against all that is or can be said, it is objected, That the Nonconformists have brought all this Mischief upon themselves, and danger to the Church, and Protestant Interest; for time was (meaning the Savoy Conference, 1661.) when the Bishops might have been perswaded to yield to many Mitigations; but some of them, now Dissenters, answered to the Question, What would you have? All or none. And so they have one part of their Choice.

But as this tends to aggravate their Sufferings; so good Nature and Grace encline us to relieve them, whose Willfulness hath brought them to a necessity of relief, or suffering. But what if neither some, nor all of them, were guilty of the Stiffness and Rashness imputed to them? then God calls aloud upon those Instruments that are yet alive, by the many Sufferings of good Ministers and People, and by apparent Dangers of the Protestant Religion, both to humble themselves before God, and to make Supplication to him, and Intercession for them, with the Supream Power: For if great detriment come to the Gospel,
and

and to many Souls, by destroying the Shepherds, and scattering the Flock, it is doubtful whether that Allegation will pass for an Excuse, or Plea, that they are Non-Conformists and Dissenters, except they could produce a Warrant from Jesus Christ, deputing them to make such Conditions. I would not for all the Preferments in the Church, charge any falsely, as being Authors of these many Tears Troubles, and would sooner beg Forgiveness, and repent, than persist in an Error, or do wrong to the Innocent. I have rather acquitted the Non-Conformists from the Blame of drawing these Evils upon themselves, than some of the other side. And, I think, I have a good Warrant for it, as can be desired by one that was not present at the whole Transaction. I am not singular in my Opinion; I find an ingenuous Gentleman lay the Fault of our Discomposures upon some old peevish Divines, as he calls them. I have been long possessed with an Opinion also, by the Words of the Presbyterian Commissioners, in the Conclusion of their Account of those Proceedings, in their last Reply. 'For all the rest we thank you — And we must say in the Conclusion, that, if these be all the Abatements and Amendments you will admit, you sell your Innocency and the Churches Peace for nothing. If the Pride, Faction, or Rashness of any one, or more, of the Commissioners, who desired a Reformation, had precipitated him into Disputation, and Contention, or a Refusal of reasonable Mitigations; why should others suffer for the Indiscretion of one? and why had not the other Side, who were potent in Friends, and highest in Favour, and either advanced, or near an Advancement into the highest Watch-Tower, condescended to some Things, that might be grateful to all moderate Men, and no just Offence to many others, and taken the Way for a lasting Peace, and so comprehensive a Settlement, that true Labourers might have been their Fellow-Labourers. I shall not in haste forget the sorrowful Complaint of a very wise and learned Conforming Divine, that could say as much to all Points of Conformity, as most, if not any of them all. The Way of Peace we have not known. I hear his Fears multiply with his Tears, and grow heavy upon him with his great Age. But upon whomsoever the Blame of our Breaches may fall, (as may appear, when a faithful History of that Conference may see the Light, which I hope to see in convenient Time.) A great Duty lies upon all true Protestants, by Prayers, Counsels, and all kind of Endeavours, to heal our Breaches, to procure Liberty to the sound and able Preachers of the Word of Life, and that neither they, nor any that fear God, and worship him in Truth, may become a Prey to them that commonly profane God's great Name, seldom worship him in Publick, and never took Joshua's Resolution for himself and his House, that can be seen by their Practice: and this every Man will do, whose Heart is ruled by the Peace of God.

I cannot end, but must take the Freedom to speak a few Words more, especially to my Conformable Brethren in the Ministry, and Justices of the Peace.

I have

I have laboured (reverend Brethren) to raise a Building (if you will touch-
safe to look into it) capacious to hold all or most of our dissenting Brethren, who
now ly out of Doors, and strong to endure all the Batteries of our Adversaries,
upon the Doctrines of our famous Bishops and Doctors, as upon a Foundation.
I am certain I have misquoted none of them, nor forced them from their Native
Sense and Coherence: If I have failed in my arguings, and kept not to the Line
of Reason, that must be discovered by sharper Lights than mine is, and by thus
doing, a Conformist may plead for the Non-Conformists, and not forsake
the Church. I have also thought that if the same Methods and Mediums were
used for healing our Divisions, which were proposed to reconcile, or at least to
cool the far greater Controversies between the Lutherans and Calvinists, by
our famous and reverend Bishops, Morton, Hall, Davenant, &c. we had seen
the Kingdom of Christ gone up apace, as the Temple did, without the Noise
of Axes and Hammers.

I am persuaded the Divisions of the Church ly near the Hearts of some of
you: and it cannot but be grievous to see into what Hands our Brethren are
fallen, as given to the Spoil, and I know the Christian Saying, as I received it from
credible Testimony, that my Lord of L. and C. answered a busy Extinguisher
of Light, who told him, Dr. G. was preaching. He is about his Master's Work,
let him alone: & again, Preaching and praying are good Works: Where there
is an Antipathy against Popery, there is Moderation to Protestant Dissenters.

I humbly beseech you, Christian Gentlemen (Justices of the Peace) bear with
me a Word or two. Do you think if peaceable Non-Conformity be not fit to be
indulged, nor spared, will Non-Conformity and Herefy, meeting in the same
Person, be indured, if it be possible to root it up? All the Disputations against
Non-Conformity now, may be strong Arguments against the Toleration of Herefy,
(as our Religion is called by the Papists) and they who stretch their Power a-
gainst Protestants for Non-Conformity, do justify the Roman Cruelties, and
prove their Proceedings to be more rational, and you, that strive with the Flat
or Back of the Sword, may be smitten with the Edge, if you can endure; and
you must take it patiently, or be self-condemned.

I beseech you, Gentlemen, consider who they are that run and ride up and
down upon this Work, that would take Ministers and Hearers, but such whose
Sacraments are Healths, filled with Wine void of the Spirit, whose Devoti-
ons are Wounds and Dam-meets: Will these ever reform a Church, that make
the World the worse? Must not that Execution of Law be thought unhappy, which
is effectually the putting one of Contzen the Jesuists Rules into Execution,
(as above said) for changing of Religion, and bringing in Popery, viz. to Pro-
ceed to the Severity of Laws and Punishments against Protestants?

POST-SCRIPT.

I Am forced to break off abruptly in the Close of these Sheets about Union, and must leave what is behind to another Part. In the mean Time, that the Union I press for, may be more easily effected, I humbly beseech my Brethren in the Ministry, and all others, to revive the almost lost Virtue of Moderation. Consider what the excellent Dean of Canterbury says in his Preface to Bishop Wilkin's 15 Sermons, lately published; where, in Vindication of that rarely accomplished Bishop, (whose great Name, and excellent Spirit it seems could not escape a smutting from some of our Fire-brands) He thus defends both the Virtue of Moderation, and that great Example of it, to wit: And I purposely (says the Dean) mention his Moderation, and likewise adventure to commend him for it; notwithstanding that this Virtue, so much esteemed and magnified by wise Men in all Ages, hath of late been declaimed against with so much Zeal and Fierceness, and yet with that good Grace and Confidence, as if it were not only no Virtue, but even the Sum and Abridgment of all Vices: I say, notwithstanding all this, I am still of the old Opinion, that Moderation is a Virtue, and one of the peculiar Ornaments and Advantages of the excellent Constitution of our Church, and must at last be the Temper of her Members, especially the Clergy, if ever we seriously intend the firm Establishment of this Church, and do not industriously design, by cherishing Heats and Divisions among our selves, to let in Popery at these Breaches. But more especially consider our blessed Saviour teacheth us Moderation by his Laws concerning these Matters in Difference, by his Apostles, by his easy Yoke, his Blessings and his Judgments; and by a visible Providence over our chief City London, which should be an Example to Norwich, Bristol, Coventry, and a Warning to them. There was nothing to be done in the Year of the dreadful Plague: The Magistrate found other Work the next Year after the dreadful Fire: two Years after the Government fell into the Hands of Sr. W. Turner, whose unsuspected Affection to the Church, made his Wisdom and Moderation the more remarkable, and the Blessing of Peace and Contentment of Mind attended. And how much happier was his Year, and of the Successors of Sir S. Sterling, than that troublesome Year to the Nonconformists, and certainly as little comfortable as it was honourable to himself. Sir Richard Ford was feared, but his eminent Prudence procured him Honour and Estimation; And what Conspiracies or Seditions were moved as much as to make him thoughtful about them? What Cause of Suspicion or Fear did the Dissenters give his honourable Successors, till the breaking out of the dreadful Plot? and did not the Lord Mayors since that, rest confident in the Loyalty and Fidelity of the Dissenters? and did not two of them concur in the Vote, against the Prosecution of them? And since the Presbyterian Sham-plots have made

made even *Hardiness and Impudence* to blush at their Confidence, what *Suspicious* have they moved to give any Colour for them? How dear was Sir *Patience Ward* to all good Men, as appeared in their publick and private Prayers for him in his dangerous Sickness? and did not he leave his Government in a peaceable safe State? After several Years Indulgence of the Non-Conformists, did they grow troublesome by their Numbers, or faction by their Ease? And I do heartily wish the R. H. Sir John More, now L. Mayor, may leave it as he found it, and carry a Peace in his Bosom, answerable to the Piety and Moderation of his Speech at his Election, (for which I know many Prayers were made for him, by some that never saw him) that his Piety may not be outsd'ed by some of

I do humbly recommend to you Mr. Bold's Sermon against Persecution: to which I set my Seal.

an imperious Humour, to impose upon others an impious notion, That Men cannot be Conscientious, but they must be Factionous, and take Pleasure, or Pride, or something else, in representing peaceable Religion as a Torch of Rebellion. What tender Heart will be able to bear the Stings of Conscience, for touching such as fear God, with but the Point of the Sword, for professing that same substantial Piety, by which they hope to be saved themselves. Duresee, duresee. Peace upon Israel.

The Conformist's fourth Plea for the Non-Conformists, containing (chiefly) Relations of the Sufferings of many Non-Conformists in several Parts of England, will be shortly published.

The Case and Cure of Persons excommunicated according to the present Law of England. With some friendly Advice to persons pursued in inferior Ecclesiastical Courts by malicious promoters; both in order to their avoiding Excommunication, or delivering themselves from prisons, if imprisoned, because they have stood excommunicated fourty Days.

Mr. Fekyl's Sermon, intituled, *Religion makes the best Loyalty*, which was prepared for that great Assembly of Protestant Lords, Gentlemen, and Citizens, that was to meet at St. Michael's Corn-hill on 21 April last; to give God thanks for the Preservation of his Majestie's Person, the Protestant Religion, and Protestant Subjects from the Popish Plot, and many Sham-plots, &c. is now published.

Sold by Jonathan Robinson at the Golden Lyon in St. Paul's Church-yard.



THE
Conformist's Third Plea
 FOR THE
NON-CONFORMISTS.

WE may think a Suspension of Severity, and a powerful Interposition between the Threatning and the Execution, would be proper and seasonable, of great Service and Advantage; but the infinitely wise God, Saviour, and King of his Church, whose Thoughts are deep and unsearchable, may think it sufficient, that they that love him have his Promise, that all things shall work together for good to them. Let them that are instructed to know his Will, do it, and that know his Promises, believe him, and that have renounced the World, freely part with their small share in it. But to me the state of things appears dark, confused, and disconsolate; and being engaged further than I thought at first, the same Motives that prevailed with me before, prevail'd with me to go on, not from a private or factious Discontent, but to prevent, as much as I can, the horrid Sins of some, and the greivous Sufferings of others, and to discharge mine own Duty, which will bring the greatest Peace, to my now grieved, broken, and afflicted Spirit.

But to come to some special matter; give me favour to run over these four things.

- I. To represent the State of our Times;
- II. The Sufferings of the *Protestant Dissenters*.
- III. For what.
- IV. By whom they suffer.

The Conformist's Third Plea

I. We are a most sinful, and sinfully divided Generation, so broken, that none but God can keep us from falling to pieces, like a Pot-sheerd broken, like a broken earthen Vessel, in which there is no pleasure. Our Reason cannot propose, nor consult Expedients to make us whole and happy, because Interests, worldly Policy, and a contemptible Art, or private Cunning to get, or save, the things that perish in their use, and by their Abuse undo and ruine the Owners, doth stir up Sedition in our Passions against our Reasons. The Gospel hath been so generally despised, that it hath not begotten in us a Faith and Love that unites to Christ, and to one another: We have not Faith enough to purify our Hearts, to overcome the World, to act as for a Crown of Glory, and a Kingdom that cannot be moved. If we believed a World to come, how little should we strive for this! If we had Love enough to cover a multitude of Sins, to forgive one another, to love as Brethren, and our Neighbour as our selves, we should not be so jealous and suspicious, nor contentious, nor selfish, as we are. One great thing is wanting, which is the Wisdom from above, described by St. James, Chap. 3. 17. *Which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, without Hypocrisy.*

There is a great Reproach cast upon the Church, and the greatest of all cast upon the Dissenters, as Dividers; but it is an ignorant or malicious Reproach, for there is nothing whole but the Church and Body of Christ: They are united to Christ, the Prince of Peace, by one Spirit, Faith and Love, and to one another by the same Bonds and Principle; Schism and Faction are from the Flesh and Devil. No sooner do Joseph and his Brethren know one another to be Brethren, but they fall upon one anothers Necks, and kiss, and weep, and repent of all their Unkindnesses, and express the dearest Love. Paul and Barnabas dissent and part, but both agree to promote the Kingdom of Christ. They that are not, and will not be reconciled to God, are the great Dividers and Breakers of the Peace; they are made up of Lusts of the Flesh, which divide and draw several ways for their Satisfaction: Whence come Wars and Fightings? come they not hence, even of your Lusts, which war in your Members? There is Dissention in the Mind, and in the Passions, between the Law in the Mind and Heart, and the Lusts of the Mind and Flesh, till the Conscience comes to be past feeling, and the Sinner falls under a reprobate Mind, and then what Confusion follows? when they call Good Evil, and Evil Good? put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes? what open Defiance is bid to God and Christ! what dissenting from, and Nonconformity to the sacred Baptismal Covenant? the holy Rules of a Gospel-Conversation? There is a Law of Faith, of Love, of Repentance, and the Penalty is heavy upon them that

that do not obey it; there is a Law of Righteousness, of following Peace and Holiness, without which no Man can see the Lord: Who transgress these Laws, and multitudes more? Yea, who is the Man that is guilty of all? And, what Sin so great now a days, and in all times, as Nonconformity? Who rob by the High-ways, who kill and steal, who curse and damn? who have Wo? who have Sorrow? who have Contentions? who have Babblings? who have Wounds without cause? Who have Redness of Eyes? *Nonconformists*. Who make the greatest Trouble to Justices and Magistrates? *Nonconformists*. Who fill Prisons and breake them? Who take leave of the World at Tyburn, and other Places? *Nonconformists*. Who draw Swords, send Challenges, fight Duels, and murder one another first with Wine and Drink, and then kill their dear Companions? *Nonconformists* and *Dissenters*. But how, there is a Distinction to be made, some *Dissenters* are tolerable, and some intolerable; the drunken *Nonconformist* is tolerable, he hath not only taken the Oaths, but swears: the other is a sober *Nonconformist*, and taking the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, will not acquit him, and he is intolerable. The *Nonconformists* that assemble to worship God are intolerable; and thousands that worship him not at all, are too commonly let alone. But are not Malefactors punished? yes, they are, but their Crimes are against Civil Peace, or Righteousness, and not immediately for Irreligion. But the *Nonconformist Dissenters* from arbitrary and variable Impositions, are punished heavily and smartly, for religious assembling, and no other Cause, as is proved in the second Plea, and is cleared hereafter.

And upon this, the Kingdom is extremely divided and troubled. There is a mighty Party in the Land, that build upon another, and a new Foundation, though by them called old. But Protestants agree in the same Foundations of Religion, obey the same Civil Government in the same Person, and same Fundamental, and Civil Laws; and yet some are separated for Sacrifice; the Lot is cast upon them, and great Rewards allowed to any that will do the Work. Our Parliaments from 1673, to the last, would have prevented this Ruine; but for their sakes and their own, they *Parliament is here taken* are now like to suffer. Our last Parliaments were *ken Synecdochically* chosen with less Expence, Debauchery, Tumult, or Faction, than any we have known in our days: Some had not been long in the House, but they were driven out of their former Prejudices and Prepossessions, by the clear and convincing Reasons and Debates of the House. They were generally Men of the noblest Estates in their severall Counties, but acting as if they had nothing private or domestick; and applying themselves to the Preservation of the King's Sacred Person;

and of the Reformed Protestant Religion, to which they are obliged by Obligations of an everlasting Effect. Since their Dissolutions, they cannot but be sensible how their Proceedings are censured and exposed; and many, either of them, or of such as approved of them, are put out of Commission, and many that are most disaffected to them are either continued, or fill up the Vacancies; and these proceed upon contrary Reasons, and Motives, and run into contrary Methods: What they would have composed and healed, these do; (taking the opportunity of a long Vacancy of Parliament) discompose, with a greater Severity than at any time before. And the Sufferings of the *Nonconformists* do clear the Members of Parliament from being *Nonconformists*, or *Fanaticks*; for if they were, they should meet with the like Treatment and Usage, and so the Sufferings of the *Nonconformists* serve as a Vindication of the Parliament, from the censure of being such themselves. (All those noble and worthy Patriots are now the unsatisfied Spectators of an excessive Trouble and Charge, if not irrecoverable Ruine of thousands of peaceable Subjects, by which the King will never be enriched, nor the Church united. The inferior Rank are affected according to their differing measures of Reason, and Sense, of Religion, and the publick Good. The more Understanding and discerning, enquire into the Cause of this Mischief, which is the dissent of the *Nonconformists*'s Judgment from some unnecessary and variable Impositions, &c. when ever the Government pleaseth may be taken away without derogation of Power, or loss of any Fundamental in Religion, either of Belief or Practice, or danger to the Government or Peace: They cannot but say, these matters of Dissention need not be. They believe their own Senses; they have neither seen, nor heard of any Sedition, or Tumult, or Plot contrived among the Protestant Dissenters. They know them to be Men of Abilities, Piety, Righteousness and Peace, and have waded through the deep Waters of many Afflictions, without sinking or drowning, or overthrowing the Ship in which too many drive a Merchandize, bring in Wealth, and others fish for Men, to save them from the bottomless Pit. If they are unacquainted with the *Nonconformist* Preachers, they are acquainted with their Hearers, and know their Principles, and Conversation, and if they are not better, they are no worse than other Men, and cannot but be grieved, that they lie at the Mercy of many that have no Vertue to commend them. They that love Godliness and Righteousness in any, in whom they believe or hope it is, that are glad for the increase of Knowledge or Godliness, by what Instrument soever, and endeavour to be merciful; as their heavenly Father is merciful, are not, and cannot be pleased with these Proceedings, of ruining Men for Conscience: These are not so subtle as to lay any great Weight upon the

the Distinctions which some Men invent to excuse the Severity. The more unknowing and unconcern'd are in a maze, wondring what kind of People these *Nonconformists* are; what kind of thing this Nonconformity is; but they know, or hear that the Men are given to pray, hear Sermons, sing Psalms, and other pious Exercises, and live, if not better; yet no worse than many that go to Church: And of these many have so much Sense, that they think and say surely, it is hard to drive honest Men's Cattel, seize their Goods, break open Houses, for doing well. And as many as love Ease and the World, take their Ease, and follow that Religion, which is encouraged with Preferment, and a Freedom from Charge and Molestation.

Some Zealots against *Nonconformists* are incensed against them, as against *Pharisees*, that pray to devour all; as against seditious Persons, and secret Traitors, that want nothing but Opportunity, as against the Authors of all our Unsettlements and Miseries. These are for the King, and who is against him? These are for the Law, as now established, and no alteration? which is to tie up the Power of the King, as much as the Parliament, for it is as much his Prerogative to abrogate old Laws when necessary, as to make new. These are for the Church of *England*, and against all that are against it; and what's that? for the Bishops; and the *Nonconformists* never did as much as petition to take them down, or diminish their Revenues: they are for preaching in Churches, and so are *Nonconformists* if they might; for Allegiance to the King, so are the *Nonconformists*; for the King's Supremacy, so are the *Nonconformists*; for Ceremonies and Orders of the Church: here they begin to disagree: And for these things can you persecute your Brethren? These Zealots are as erroneous for these things, as any others are against them. The most of our Conforming-Protestant Laicks are bound to bear Offices, higher or lower, in Cities, Towns, Hundreds, Parishes. The superiour Magistrates may forbear to break open Meetings for Religious Exercises, or set others on, much more to animate the Rabble to pluck down their Meeting-Houses; there is no Law for it, that we, the unskilful in the Laws, know, or hear of: The inferior are under Command, but these are meant of only lawful Commands, and legal Warrants. And here is now a very displeasing Tragedy to be seen. Here are Informers, very Strangers in the Countries, which they plague and molest, that swear against some Persons by hear-say, whom they do not know; and these are the great Ministers of Justice, they do little less, nay sometimes no less than expect the Justices should take their Information without Examination of them, at their time, at the very nick, when they please, and not when the Justice pleaseth: These are the Masters of the Justices themselves, who must serve them.

The Conformist's Third Plea

them, or forfeit 50 *l.* to them, and 50 *l.* more to him that can get it. Some Justices are forward and officious in carrying on this *Work of Reformation and Union*, they issue forth Warrants upon them that meet, upon the Parish Officers that are slack; some give out Warrants to break open Houses for distress, some are cautious how they go so far. The dissenting Subject keeps up close, and upon his Market-day keeps his Shop shut, as if he were broken, or hid his head from Serjeants, yea, from worse Men than common Bailiffs: The Informer keeps the Street, and hath whom he pleaseth at his command. The Parish Officer is in a threefold Difficulty or Strait: 1. The Justice of Peace fines him, and threatens worse to him, if he doth not make distress. 2. It goes against his Nature and his Love to his Neighbour, Friend, Kinsman; it goes against his Conscience to distrain the Goods, and spoil the Trade, and beggar innocent Children, he cannot do it; but if he do not, he shall rue it himself; he is fined, and he is further threatned. The Informer is now *pro tempore*, his superior Officer, he must execute his Warrants. 3. He is in another Difficulty: If he break into his Neighbour's House, he is told he cannot justify it by Law, by some sage Counsellors; the owner of the House and Goods may sue him for breaking into his House: He is told he hath but one Remedy, when he is sued, the Justice will stand by him, and the Favour of the Court, and Partiality of a Jury, will be his Defender: But really, is not this an hard case, that a Man must ruine others, or be ruined? and do these Actions look as if they did really rejoyce that they are ruled by Law? when without Law, or against Law, he proceeds in hopes of Favour: And what is all this for, but to get Money for the chief Ruler, *the noble Informer*: the Shame and Scourge of his Country. Gentlemen and Magistrates that have Wisdom to foresee, and sense of what they see, are disquieted in their Minds; the Envious, in hope of encreasing their own Trade, are more modest than to approve it, and they who are Scorners of Religion, make merry at it. And this is a true, but imperfect face of the times; and I divulge no Secrets.

II. The Sufferings of the *Nonconformists* have been courfully and darkly opened in the two former Pleas, and will be more particularly set forth in what follows. Their former Sufferings come upon them again, and that with the Addition of more Weight and Violence; many have by an indecent Art done what they can, to shut up both his Majesties Eyes and Heart. I call it indecent, because we owe a greater Reverence to the King, they have thanked him for his ruling by Law, and declared their Adherence to the Church of *England* as established by Law: As soon as they have done this, they crave leave to execute the Laws upon

upon *Dissenters*, as if they would take the King at his Word, and while the Gracious Declaration was fresh, that there might be no room for wanted Mercy and Indulgence, except he should recede from his Royal Word, almost as soon as sent abroad; They seem to oblige the Bishops and the Church, by declaring for it as establish'd, and thereby tied their Tongues and Pens from supplicating for their Protestant Brethren; for if they do, they will be interpreted to act contrary to themselves, and their own Establishment: and no doubt but many a fair Story is told them, of I know not what invisible Machinations against them: They must look on while a Course is taken, which will reflect upon them and their Government, as much, if not more, than a tolerated Nonconformity. The more discreet, and moderate sort of Magistrates are look'd upon as favouring of Parliamentary Notions, either are left out of the Commissions of Lieutenancy and Peace, or act not at all, or act by way of Mitigation of Rigor; the most declaredly opposite to the Parliaments, to Protestant Dissenters seem to act alone; therefore the Law falls with multiplied Aggravations upon Preachers and People. What was argued by way of Consequence in the second Plea, proves now to be true, as if it had been a Prophecy. The *Dissenters* are fined for so many Meetings past: That there are Fines upon the Officers of one little Market-Town, for neglecting to break their Neighbours, amounting to 200*l.* and the Fines upon one Preacher and his Hearers come to about 1000*l.* if they may be exactly levied. What is the Case of Populous Places! They suffer spiritually, bodily, really, and relatively: A Man cannot marry his Daughter to a Dissenting Protestant, but he is like one that throws away her Portion; a Man cannot put a Child apprentice to a Dissenting Protestant, but he is in danger of losing his Money, and his Son of losing his Trade, by his Master's not being able to follow it, nor to hold; many of them are in as bad a case as the Papists, if the Laws were fully executed upon them: for some Protestants are returned into the Exchequer, and their Estates under Composition, and the Parts that are left to them are liable to other Laws against them. But if the Executioners of the Laws stop at the Composition, there would be something left certain to them: But the remaning two Parts are subject to these Laws, the *Oxford* and five Mile Act, and this against Conventicles, and to the Ecclesiastical Courts besides; they are obnoxious to Excommunications, Significavits, Writs *de Excommunicatio capiendo*, to Banishment and Abjuration, and Felony if they abjure not: Some question whether that Act of Q. E. 35. be in force, but several are brought in danger of it as if it were, besides to all manner of Taxes and Payments. They are more hardly used than Papists: Some have paid 20*l.* and 3*s.* over and over: But now their whole Estates will

will not satisfy the Demands of Informers and Warrants. The only way that Men of Estates have, is to become Tenants and Servants to secure them, by making them over in Trust. The Miseries of their Souls are not yet reckoned by me, to prevent which, they have ventured long by hearing such Ministers as they conceived most profitable: But now for endeavouring to flee from the Wrath to come, they are fallen under the Vengeance of cruel and merciless Informers, and to save their Souls, have brought Ruine upon their Estates.

III. And what is all this for? It is for Nonconformity; which may be considered two ways.

1. Privatively, not conforming.

2. Positively, being *Nonconformists* to the Laws of Uniformity, preaching, and holding Religious Exercises, this is the Preachers Crime; the Crime of the People is hearing, or joyning with them in such Exercises of Religion, as are without controversy necessary and profitable. This, and only this, is the cause of all those many, and great Sufferings of every kind which they have endured, and under which no man can comfortably stand without Faith, Self-denial, Contentment, and the Conscience of well-doing, and the hope of Eternal Life, the great Recompence of Reward! And this being the Cause, and the sole Cause of their Sufferings, it is such as calls for Pity and great Tenderness, and is no just Cause of their many Molestations, and bitter Sufferings, as I intend to shew in my following Discourse, as God shall help me.

IV. By whom, and from whom, and through whose means they are now again exposed to Sufferings. I cannot shew the Spring of the Motion, but any Man may see the Hands that strike, and tell us what time of day it is: I do very much doubt whether the most engaged Instruments do know whose Work they carry on, this is my Charity; but if they do, I dare say, what they cannot hear without either great displeasure, horror or repentance. But they are,

1. Such as cannot take it ill to be called Addressers and Abhorrrers, but they (as far as I can look about me and see) particularly that have thanked the King for declaring his Resolutions of ruling by Law, which if any of the *Nonconformists* had expressed a doubt or fear of, had been a far greater Offence than their Nonconformity. They have declared for the Protestant Religion as established by Law, and yet punish them that profess the same, and no other.

2. And by Consequence, they are such as have declared a dislike of the Proceedings of our late Parliaments, and in that particular of endeavouring the uniting of Protestant Dissenters, in which alone I am concerned

concerned to take notice of them, and act directly contrary to the Vote of the House of Commons, which resolved, *That it is the Opinion of this House, that the Prosecution of Protestant Dissenters upon the penal Laws, is at this time grievous to the Subject, a weakening to the Protestant Interest, an Encouragement of Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom*; And by the Rule of Opposition, they must in their Opinions turn this Vote backward, as if they thought that the Prosecution of Protestant Dissenters upon the present Laws, is not grievous to the Subject, is not a weakening of the Protestant Interest, is not an encouragement of Popery, nor dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom: Certainly they must be supposed to hold this, as contrary to the general and unanimous Judgment of the far greater Number: for, as *Nemine Contradicente*, doth not contain every particular Man's Vote; so it doth no less than imply a Consent, or that to declare a Dissent is to no purpose; there is no Division of the House upon it; only if they do not hold this, contrary to the House, they must act both irrationally and desperately in this sense. Altho the House of Commons declared their Opinion to be so; yet I a Justice, or I an inferiour Officer, will prosecute the Protestant Dissenters, or execute the Penal Laws upon them, tho it be a weakening of the Protestant Interest, altho it be an Encouragement to Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom. Or if this Consequence from these Proceedings be too harsh, and censorious, I will mollify it as much as it is capable of a mollified Construction: Let this be the Opinion of the Prosecutors now. The Execution of the Penal Laws, is not grievous to the Subject; that is, it is grievous but to some, and not to all: it is not grievous to the Subject, because it is not grievous to them, and then we shall have a Discrimination of Subjects; to this sense. They only, who execute the Laws, or approve of it, are the only Subjects of the King; or that the Dissenters can suffer Punishments, and the Punishments not be grievous to them. Or, that the Dissenters are not Subjects, but Rebels (a sort of quiet Rebels certainly) may we never see any other than such unarmed quiet Rebels! Again, they must think, that the Execution of the Laws upon them, is no weakning of the Protestant Interest; that is to say, they are no Protestants. And now the meaning is plain, that there are no Protestants amongst us, but those that are of the Church-Government established by Law, and are of it, or submit to it; or that read, or joyn in the Liturgy, or do all that the Law requires; that is, the Act of Uniformity, and then a Question will arise, Where was the Protestant Religion before 1662, or before the last Long-Parliament? Or, where is it like to be, when these Protestants no-Protestant-Dissenters are cut off? where it was before *Luther*.

The Conformist's Third Plea

If only the Conformists are the Protestants, then what sort of them? If only one sort of them, then the Catholick Church of *England* may be not much bigger than some great Conventicle, or great Parish. They who make this Separation of Protestants, are Separatists and Disciples, the National Tutors and Instructors, in such wholesome and profitable Doctrine, both in Divinity, and Politicks. If Conformity, *tota in toto*, &c. makes the Protestant, and be convertible with him, it makes as good a Definition of a Protestant, as of a Man by Accidents. A Man is a rational Creature, that wears curled Locks, long Hair, Hose and Shoos, &c. or of a Philosopher, he is a Scholar that wears a Beard, &c.

But to go on, they may be thought to, be of Opinion, that to punish Dissenters, is no Encouragement to Popery; for when they have rooted them up, then they will root up Popery, as if they could not come at those great Oaks, before they have cut up the Brash-wood. Or lastly, they do not think it dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom, to suppress Dissenters. 1. Because they know that the Dissenters, when undone, will not molest or disturb the Peace of the Kingdom. Or else, 2. Because they intend to make them so poor, that they shall not be able to disturb the Peace. Or, 3. Because it is the only way of Peace.

But here again, a Questionist sets upon me as I go peaceably on in my Discourse. If the Dissenters are not dangerous to the Peace of Kingdom, why are they disturb'd, and their Meetings broken up as seditious Meetings?

2. If they are dangerous, and their Meetings seditious, then whether are they more dangerous, when they are pleased, quiet, and in Peace, or when they are provoked? When they enjoy Trades, Liberty, and Estates, or when they are imprisoned and undone?

To conclude this Head: If our zealous Prosecutors think, as the House of Commons did, in their foresaid Vote; then why will they act contrary to that general Opinion? or if they are of a contrary Opinion, as I have said: then follows,

3. A third Branch of the Description of the Prosecutors. They are such as do not, yea cannot understand the State of the Kingdom, and Religion so well as the House of Commons did.

1. No one Man of them can understand the true State of the Kingdom, as a Grand Assembly of our Representatives did.

2. Nor all of them: for when the Representatives of the Kingdom met, they had such Informations given in, and brought before them, and saw what was invisible to others; there was a Collection of Observations, and the Eyes of most of the Kingdom moved in that great Body, and their Debates and Reasonings were mature, and full. And tho' a Vote have not the Formality and Force of an Act, yet it is the

the first Matter and Original of an Act, out of which an Act doth arise.

3. This Vote was not of private Concernment, in which, Interest makes Men partial, but it was of Concernment to the Church and Kingdom. But many of the first movers in the Prosecution, and of the Instruments in it, act from a private Spirit, and a particular Interest, and find neither Concurrence from any, that are at liberty, and act as Freemen, nor Approbation from the Standers-by; except the few that know not what they do, and care not what others do, any more than *Gallio*.

Lastly, the inferiour sort, are Informers and Inferiour Officers, Constables, and Church-wardens, &c. of these; there is not one of many, but what abide severe Threatnings, and heavy Fines, considering their Estates, before they distrain. This way is contrary to the very common Sense of Christians, and ordinary Men. But the Informers are a select Company, whom the long Suffering of God permits for a time, of whom I will say but little in this place: They are of no good Reputation; for their Knowledg in the Country, they do not know the Names, or Persons of some of them that are molested by them; they go by report of their under-Servants or Complices; they are unknown to them that suffer by them, until they suffer: They come two or three Counties off, to set up this new Trade; whether they are Papists or (nominal) Protestants, who can tell? They never come to Church, not to their own Parish-Churches, but lie in wait and ambush. Their Estate is invisible, their Country unknown to many; their Morals are as bad as the very Dregs of the Age. These are they that direct and rule many of the Magistrates, and live upon the spoil of better Christians and Subjects than themselves; And who go away with honest Mens Goods, honestly gotten, but they? To whom I have a great deal to say in the latter Part, if I can hold my Pen without trembling, while I write of them.

The Substance of what I intend to discourse upon, is contained in these three Heads.

- I. I will shew the Cause of the Sufferings of the *Nonconformists*.
- II. Argue for a Cessation of this forcible Course against them.
- III. Apply the whole to the Instruments of their Sufferings, whether they be Magistrates, Ministers, Informers, or others.

I. The only Cause of their Sufferings, is their Nonconformity. Of this I have spoken as fully as I thought needful at that time, both in

The Conformist's Third Plea

the First Plea ; opening the hardness of their Case, *First Plea*, from p. 14, &c. *Second Plea*, p. 10, 11. I must reassume this Head anew, for a further Information of the World, and Amplification of the thing, in reference to their Sufferings ; and lay both before the Conscience of the Christian Reader, who may propose this Case of Conscience, as rising from it, *Whether the Nonconforming Christians and Protestants ought to suffer as they do, and what they do, merely for Nonconformity.*

For the opening of this Point once again, I will consider Nonconformity as above-said.

1. Privatively, and passively, as not doing what the Law requires.
2. Positively and actively, as doing what the Law forbids.

1. Take Nonconformity in the first Sense, and what is it but not subscribing, or refusing to subscribe to what is required, and not declaring what is required to be declared in the Act of Uniformity ? and by consequence, not doing as is required in the Act, for the Common-Prayer ; here lies their Nonconformity ; and hence the Name is taken.

2. They do not refuse all and every Condition therein required of them. It is not possible that I should particularly relate what Particular-Men do scruple, and stick at ; some can do more than others can ; but they who can do most, cannot do all required.

They are by some counted worse than Papists ; looked upon as a sort of ignorant, erroneous, obstinate, unreasonable Men, seditious, and schismatical, that obey neither King, nor Bishops, nor Church ; and are ignorantly, and scornfully called *These Men*, and *these kind of People*, as if they were a strange odd sort of People, wilfully bent upon their own Way, Delusions, and Fancies, as if they carried the Sparks of Rebellion, and the Seeds of Heresies, and false Doctrine in their Hearts, and kindled them in their Conventicles.

But know that they are as obedient, regular Subjects as any in the King's Dominions, save in one Defect, or Omission, which is Subscribing, Swearing, Declaring according to a particular late Act of Uniformity, and Corporation. And to them that wonder at them, that censure, condemn, and afflict them, I give this short Distinction, and Account of them.

1. The Preachers and Teachers, are Men brought up in Learning, in Schools and Universities, or in University Learning, if not in the Universities: The older sort have for the most part, taken Degrees in the Universities, were in former times ordained by Bishops, and had con-
formed

formed to all, or the principal things required by the old Act of Uniformity. The middle-aged among them have had the like Learned Education, and are Ministers, either ordained by Bishops, or by Presbyters, or elected and chosen by particular Congregations, and set apart for that Work by Fasting and Prayer, if not also, by Imposition of Hands. The younger sort, have Education in Learning, in Schools, Tongues, Arts and Sciences, the same that are taught in our Universities, though they are taught out of the Universities, in a more private way, and have not the Titles of Graduates in Arts and Divinity. In a word, they are (tho in different Degrees and Proportion, some more, and some less) learned, pious, painful, self-denying, able, and successful Ministers, and orderly, and peaceable Subjects according to all other Laws, as any of us are: Their Hearers are like other Men, bred up in Trades, and Callings, as other Men are, as is commonly and universally known.

In short, let them that think strangely of them, as *these Men, and these kind of Men*, receive this impartial Character of them: The *Nonconformists* are Christians, believing all the Articles of the Christian Faith; that observe whatsoever Christ commanded his Apostles to observe, and teach; that observe all the Ordinances of the Gospel, according to the general Rules of the Gospel-Worship, Government and Discipline (according to the best of their Understandings, and Prudence); that obey every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake; that are subject to Principalities and Powers; that obey Magistrates, that live by the Law of Love, and Righteousness; that have their Conversation according to the Gospel, as other Christians, or as the best of other Christians do, and that submit, observe, and obey all Laws of the Kingdom, as other Subjects do; save the aforesaid Act of Uniformity, and Subscriptions and Oaths of late Years imposed, and never before.

And this Character of them, contains matter of Answer to the many Questions, Accusations and Censures raised upon them. They are reported to be factious, fanatical, unlearned, unordained, rebellious, and unreasonable Men, disloyal, disobedient, against the King and all Government, Decency and Order, as if they were for all Sects and sorts of Religion, allowing all Men to do what seemeth good to them: But in this short Description of them, you may find an Answer to vulgar and popular Objections against them, and more fully spoken of in the two former Pleas.

In the *Second Plea*, p. 10, 11, 12. I have said, that the Difference between the *Nonconformist*, (commonly, but unduly and unjustly called, *Presbyterian*) and the *Conformist*, is to be seen and gathered from the King's own Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs, which they would have submitted to, if it had been turned into an Act of Parliament, and the Act of Uniformity.

I shall now further enlarge upon that Notion, and shew you what the King declared, and what they would have accepted; because many that think and speak hardly of them, do not know how things stood at that time, and what that Declaration is.

In the Year 1660, after that General Monk, (made Duke of Albemarle afterwards by the King) declared himself for a Free-Parliament, and by the Counsel and Assistance of the City of London, restored the Members of the old Parliament, that were shut out by some of the Army, before ever they could bring about their Designs against the King's Life; and there was a wise and good Council of State chosen: many of the Royal Nobility, and Gentry, and some Divines, put out a Declaration, in which are these words.

And we do further declare, that we intend by our quiet and peaceable Behaviour, to testify our Submission to the present Power, as it now resides in the Council of State, in Expectation of the future Parliament, upon whose Wisdom and Determinations, we trust God will give such a Blessing as may produce a perfect Settlement both in Church and State. This was subscribed by the Marquess of Dorchester, and twenty Earls and Lords, several Noble-Men, about thirty two Baronets and Knights, and between eighty and an hundred Gentlemen, among whom is Mr. Roger L'Estrange (then a Christian, professing Reconciliation, promising with the rest, *To speak one Language, to be of one Name (not Whig and Tory) that all mention of Factions and Parties, and all Rancor may be thrown in and buried like Rubbish under the Foundation:* These are the words of it; but as Dr. Collings of Cambridge said once, *Then was then, and now is now;* one Irish Bishop subscribed it, and four Doctors of Divinity, and the first of them was Dr. Morley, the yet-living Lord Bishop of Winchester. How gladly did all honest Men receive this Declaration, as tending to a firm Reconciliation, and afterwards to a lasting Union, and universal Peace, not so much as a name of Faction or Difference to be kept in memory! neither did any suspect the meaning of burying all Factions and Animosities, like Rubbish under the Foundation, to be, as now some Mens Actions and Writings explain it, that Factions and Animosities do lie under the Foundation, which is at this day shaken, being so underlaid; Faction and Animosity will not lie buried, but rise and walk.

In April 1660, That hoped-for Parliament met; and to the Speakers of both Houses, His Majesty sent his Letter, and Declaration from his Court at Breda; in his Letter, I read these Words, relating to Religion. —

*His Majesties Letter
from Breda, April, 14.
1660, p. g. 6.*

And nothing can be proposed to shew our Zeal and Affection for it, to which we will not readily consent; and we hope in due time, our Self to propose somewhat to you, for the Propagation of it.

In his Declaration sent therewith, are these words.

— *We do declare a Liberty to tender Consciences, and that no Man shall be disquieted, or called in question for differences of Opinion in matter of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom.* — In October 25 1666, 60 His Majesty was pleased to send out his Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs, in which he was pleased to remember and repeat the (fore-cited) words of his Letter, whereby it is clear, that that which he had long in his Mind, to propose for the Propagation of Religion, was the Contents of this Declaration, — Adding in the next Sentence, Pag. 4. *And the truth is, We do think our Self the more competent to propose, and with God's Assistance, to determine many things now in difference, from the time we have spent, and the Experience we have had in most of the Reformed Churches abroad.* And besides what is quoted out of it in the Second Plea, pag. 65. he hath these words, *We must for the honour of all those of either Perswasion, with whom we have conferred, declare that the Professions and Desires, of all for the advancement of Piety and true Godliness are the same, their Professions of Zeal for the Peace of the Church the same; of Affection and Duty to us the same: They all approve of Episcopacy; they all approve of a set Form of Liurgy; and they all disprove and dislike the Sin of Sacriledg, and the Alienation of the Revenue of the Church; and if upon these excellent Foundations, in submission to which, there is such an Harmony of Affections, any Superstructures should be raised, to the shaking those Foundations, and to the contrabating and lessening the blessed Gift of Charity, which is the vital part of Christian Religion, we shall think our selves very unfortunate.* Pag. 8. *We have not the least doubt, but that the Present Bishops will think the present Concessions now made by us, to allay the present Distempers, very just and reasonable, and will very cheerfully conform themselves thereto.* Thus the King declares his Confidence of the Bishops Compliance with his Proposal, and Declaration, which is thus contracted.

1. *Our purpose is to promote the Power of Godliness, to encourage the Exercise of Religion, both publick and private; that the Lord's day be applied to holy Exercises; that insufficient, negligent, and scandalous Ministers be not permitted in the Church; to prefer none to be Bishops, but Men of Learning, Vertue and Piety, that they be frequent Preachers, &c.*

2. *Because the Diocesses are too large, we will appoint Suffragan Bishops, for the due performance of the Work.*

3. *No Bishops shall ordain or exercise any Jurisdiction without Advice of the Presbyters; no Chancellour or Commissary shall decree any Excommunication or Absolution; nor shall the Deacons exercise any Jurisdiction without the Advice and Assistance of six Ministers.*

4. *That (Cathedral) Preferments shall be given to the most learned, and pious Presbyters of the Diocess; and that an equal number (to those*

those of the Chapter) of the ablest Presbyters, of the Diocess annually chosen by the major Vote of the Presbyters, shall be always advising and assisting with those of the Chapter, in all Ordinations, and every the part of Jurisdiction and Censures.

5. That Confirmation be solemnly performed, by the Information and Consent of the Minister of the place; who shall admit none to the Lord's Supper, till they make a credible Profession of their Faith; Care be taken to instruct and reform the scandalous, whom the Minister shall not receive to the Lord's Supper, till they have openly declared their Repentance. The rural Dean, with three or four Ministers of the Deanary, chosen by Ministers of the Deanary, shall meet once a Month, to receive Complaints and Presentments, to compose Differences, reform things amiss by Admonitions, and to present such things to the Bishop, as cannot be reformed by their pastoral Perswasions; to see that all the younger sort be carefully instructed, before they be confirmed.

6. No Bishop shall exercise any Arbitrary Power.

7. — Since we find some Exceptions made against several things in the Liturgy; we will appoint an equal number of Divines of both Perswasions, to review the same, and to make such Alterations, as shall be thought most necessary, and some additional Forms, and it shall be left to the Minister to chuse one or other. In the mean time, we desire that Ministers would read those parts, against which there lies no Exceptions; yet in compassion to them that scruple it, our Will and Pleasure is, that none be punished or troubled for not using it, until it be effectually reformed, as aforesaid.

8. We gratify those who are grieved with the use of some Ceremonies, by indulging to, and dispensing with their omitting those Ceremonies: and leave all Decisions about them, to the Advice of a National Synod.

None shall be denied the Lord's Supper for not kneeling; none compelled to use the Cross, it shall be lawful to him that desires to use the Cross, to have such Ministers as will use it; and if the proper Minister refuse to omit it, the Parent shall get another Minister that will, to baptize his Child. None compell'd to bow at the Name of Jesus. The Surplice left to liberty, except the Royal Chappel, Cathedral Churches, or Colledges in Universities. Those that cannot subscribe the Canon, and take the Oath of Canonical Obedience, shall only take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy; that none forfeit his Benefice, that subscribes all the Articles of Religion, which only concern the Confession of the true Christian Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments. He repeated again his Declaration of Liberty of Conscience before cited; — And concludes

‘conclude, and in this place to explain what we mentioned before, That
 ‘we hoped in due time, to propose somewhat for the Propagation of the
 ‘Protestant Religion, that will satisfy the World, that we have always
 ‘made it both our Care and our Study, and have observed enough, what
 ‘is most like to bring Disadvantage to it. We do conjure all our loving
 Subjects to acquiesce, and submit to this our Declaration, concerning those
 Differences which have so much disquieted the Nation at home, and
 given so much Offence to the Protestant Churches abroad, &c.

The Parliament which restored the King, then sitting, thanked him
 for this Declaration; the Divines of London, called the Presbyterian, did
 also thank him for it: and I never was acquainted with any conforming
 Divine, that did not approve of it, more than of the exact Conformity
 afterwards required; and I cannot but think, if a Scrutiny were to be
 made, but more Ministers of Learning, Plety and Experience, that are
 not biassed with Preferments, would judge it a far better Expedient for
 our Peace, and the Propagation of the Protestant Religion (as his
 Majesty speaks), than our tried Strictness and Rigor; yea, I doubt
 not but many of our considerable dignified Clergy, are, or would be, of
 the same mind.

After this, the King gave a Commission according to his Declaration,
 to an equal number of Divines, to review, and reform the Common-
 Prayer. The Presbyterian Divines (as they were called) presented
 their Exceptions to the Bishops and Commissioners, who returned them
 an Answer, not favouring of fatherly Condescension, nor giving hopes
 of a desirable Closure, not as much as to leave the use of a Ceremony at li-
 berty and free; and by the stile it seems to be written by one or more
 of the Doctors, and not by the Bishops themselves. To this the other
 Commissioners replied, which was not thought worth their notice, so
 much as to give them another gentle Rebuke.

When the four Months, allowed for the Debates and Consultation,
 were expired, the Commissioners, who were slighted, present a Petition
 and due Account of the matter to the King, and say thus. ‘And tho
 ‘the Account which we are forced to give to your Majesty, of the Issue
 ‘of our Consultation, is, that no Agreements are subscribed by us, to
 ‘be offerred to your Majesty according to your Expectation; and tho
 ‘it be none of our intent to cast the least unmeet Reflection upon the
 ‘Right Reverend Bishops, and learned Brethren, who think not meet
 ‘to yield to any considerable Alterations, to the Ends expressed in your
 ‘Majesties Commission, yet we must say it is some quiet to our Minds, that
 ‘we have not been guilty of your Majesties and Subjects Disappoint-
 ‘ments, and that we account not your Majesties Gracious Commission,
 ‘and our Labour lost, having Peace of Conscience in discharge of our

'Duty to God and you, that we have been the Seekers and Followers
'of Peace, and have earnestly pleaded, and humbly petitioned for it.
'And we humbly beseech your Majesty to believe that we own no Prin-
'ciples of Faction or Disobedience, nor patronize the Errors and Ob-
'stinacy of any. — It is the desire of our Souls to contribute our Parts
'and Interest to the uttermost, for the promoting of Holiness, Charity,
'Unity, and Obedience to Rulers in all lawful things; but if we should
'sin against God, because we are commanded, who shall answer for us,
'or save us from his Justice? — And we know that conscientious
'Men will not consent to the practising of things, in their Judgment
'unlawful, when *those may yield who count the matter indifferent* — We
'must not believe that when your Majesty took our Consent to a Litu-
'rgy, to be a Foundation that would infer our Concord, you meant not,
'we should have no Concord, but by consenting to this Liturgy, with-
'out any considerable Alteration — We most humbly beseech your
'Majesty, that the benefit of the said Declaration, may be continued to
'your People, and in particular, that none be punished or troubled
'for not using the Common-Prayer, till it be effectually reformed, and
'the Addition made as these express.

They presented to the Bishops and the other Commissioners the
Reformation of the Liturgy, and a most humble, grave, pathetical
Petition, called the Petition for Peace; towards the end, they address
themselves to them in these Words, *Grant us but the Freedom which*
Christ and his Apostles left unto the Churches; use necessary things as necessary,
and unnecessary things as unnecessary; and charitably bear with the Infirmitie of
the weak, and tolerate the tolerable while they live peaceably, and then you will
know when you have done; and for the Intolerable, we beg not your Toleration, &c.

I am sensible I have been long upon this historical Retrospect of these
Passages, to inform those who seem not to know, or remember these
things; Yet I cannot go on without leaving some Animadversions and
Remarks upon them.

1. We might have seen the disagreeing Parties running into an Union
under the King, as their supream lawful Head and Governour.
The reputed *Presbyterian* comprehending a great, powerful, considerate,
substantial part of the Kingdom, most close and deliberate in
Counsel, active in Endeavours, fervent in Prayer with their Ministers
for the Restauration of the King and the ancient Government, watching
all Opportunities, and using all means to engage General Monk, and
his well disciplined, and most *Presbyterian* part of the Army, to declare
for the restoring the secluded Members in order to a free Parliament,
and that in order to bring back the King. The most eminent of the
Royal Party, declaring a Reconcilableness, and Oblivion of all Sufferings,
acknow-

acknowledging the Hand of God in them all. And the King to compleat and perfect all, by laying a Top-stone, as well as the Foundation of the Temple of Peace, gathers all Parties into himself; some by Comprehension in a wider Constitution, others by a safe indulgent Toleration, which if granted, had been desired by the least and most inconsiderable part of the Nation; for the Dissenters had been fewer than now they are, because abundance had been taken into the proposed Settlement: The Sects have much encreased, since that time of Papists, if not other Denominations—. The King and his wise Council had a perfect full view of all Interests, and did weigh out proper Preparatives for an healing Effect.

2. It is a Shame and Grief to think that a divided Nation can be sooner composd and settled, than a broken divided Church, who have, besides the Motives and Principles of Nature, the most gracious Reconciler for their Law-giver, the most perfect Laws of Love, the most indulgent Government, under the strict and indispenible Duty of Self-denial, opposite to Self-seeking, and should have the least Consideration and Regard of a worldly Interest, because, *They that are of Christ, they are not of this World*; and having nothing to do but to promote, enlarge, and build up Christ's Kingdom upon Earth, and for all their Self-denial, Services, and Sufferings, have the Promises of Eternal Life, an everlasting Kingdom, and Thrones in it. It is a most afflicting Meditation, that Church-Divisions are most difficultly healed. What an humbling Thought is this! that a temporal Interest divides worldly Men, in whom Self prevails, and yet worldly Men can unite under general Common Laws, because it is their Interest to unite; and yet they, who of all Men are under the greatest Obligations to unite, that declare they are not of this World, that teach the way of Peace to others, cannot find it themselves! But it is not Religion, and Light, that divide, but it is Darkneſs, and the Spirit of this World. If to us to live were Christ, then Christian Faith and Love, would make us more heavenly, and by Consequence, more united. Popery could never have that Compass to work our Ruine in, had we agreed as we should have done: Pardon this Excursion; I'll return. The Church is rent from the Top to the Bottom, the King surveys it, and hath a Proposal in his Mind, which will not only repair the Breaches, *but propagate Religion*, as he often said; he seems to be fond of it, he speaks so often of it. It was meditated, and formed in his Royal Mind while he was in *Breda*; that it may not be thought an hasty and immature Production, he gives it full time, and cherisheth it. And what is it but his Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs! It was beheld, as the most Royal Issue of an happy Mind, as the First-born of Church-Peace, after the most affectionate Conjunction

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of a most well-come King to a Kingdom that longed for him.

1. He offers himself as an Umpire and Reconciler.

2. He declares, to his great Satisfaction and Comfort, that while he was in *Holland*, he found the principal Assertors of the Presbyterian Opinion, full of Affection to him, Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, neither Enemies to Episcopacy nor Liturgy, but modestly desiring Alterations without shaking Foundations; and to the same purpose over again, pag. 8.

3. He thinks himself to be competent to make his Proposal, and determine many things in difference, as above-said, and pag. 4. of the Declaration.

4. He expressed some great Confidence in the Bishops: *We have not the least doubt, but that the present Bishops will think the present Concessions made by us to allay the present Distempers, very just and reasonable, and will very cheerfully conform themselves thereto*, pag. 10.

5. He conjured all his loving Subjects to acquiesce in, and submit to that his Declaration concerning those Differences, pag. 18, 19.

6. You have read the King's Character of the Reforming Divines (so I'll call them, rather than Presbyterian) and they made it good, they strictly followed the Orders in the King's Commission, made their Exceptions, which they were impowered to do, explained, and shewed the Reasonableness of them; when answered, they replied; when called to dispute, they disputed; and when they saw all was but dashing against a Wall, they petition for Peace, both the King and Bishops.

Now to all them that speak slightly or scornfully; *These Men, these kind of Men*; as if they were some Monsters rolling in a troubled Sea, and not suffering the Ark of Christ's Church to rest, here is some account, if not Satisfaction, given.

But after our great hopes of Church-Peace and Union, what followed but a dismal Breach? a Wound that lies a bleeding! and they upon whom the Pinacles of the Temple fell, and bruised and crushed, are now instead of a cleanly Hospital to live in, threatned with *Bridewel*, and *Prisons*, and with that dreadful Sentence of Abjuration. And Christian Reader, if you do as I do, here Grief doth make you stop. That any Magistrate that hath taken the Sacrament to prove himself a Protestant, dare menace, or admonish any Christian Minister to do what he cannot do, or forswear his native Country! And wo be to *England*, when a Minister of Christ, successful in his Work, not imaginary but real, shall be carried to the Sea-side, and swear he will never return to his Native Country; and that such Ministers shall not have as much as a mean House or Barn to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in!

But

But who made the Breach? who hindered the hopeful Closure? self-willed, obstinate *Nonconformists*? The Nonconformity to the Law of Love, Peace, Meekness, Forbearance, hath done the Mischief. The King's Declaration would have done what the Act of Uniformity could not do, but we may look, and find the first Cause to lie between them both.

To lay this open, compare but some words in the King's Commission, with some of the Answers of the Anti-reforming Commissioners, and then judg impartially.

The King according to his Declaration, gave his Commission to an equal number of Divines of both Perswasions, bearing date *March 25*, in the thirteenth Year of his Reign.

We in the Accomplishment of our said Will and Intent,— do authorize you — to advise upon, and review the said Book of Common-Prayer, comparing it with the most ancient Liturgies of the purest Times, — to take to your serious Consideration, the several Directions, Rules, Forms of Prayer, and things in the Book of Common-Prayer contained, to advise, consult upon and about the same, and the several Objections and Exceptions, which shall now be raised against the same; and, if occasion be, to make such reasonable and necessary Alterations, Corrections, and Amendments therein, — as shall be agreed upon to be needful and expedient, for the giving Satisfaction to tender Consciences, &c.

The Bishops, &c. answer, 'On the contrary we judg, That
' if the Liturgy should be altered, as is there required, not only a Multi-
' tude, but the Generality of the soberest and most Loyal Children of
' the Church of *England* would justly be offended, since such an Alterati-
' on would be a virtual Concession, that this Liturgy was an intolerable
' Burthen to tender Consciences, a direct Cause of Schism, a super-
' stitious Usage (upon which Pretences it is here desired to be altered)
' which would at once justify all those who have obstinately separated
' from it, as the only pious, tender-conscienced Men, and condemn all
' those that have adhered to it, in conscience of their Duty and Loy-
' alty, with the loss and hazards of their Estates, and Fortunes, as
' Men superstitious, schismatical, and void of Religion and Conscience.
' For these Reasons and those that follow, we cannot consent to such
' an Alteration as is desired, till these Pretences be proved.

And now it might easily appear to them, what afterwards came to pass; but let us observe:

1. There

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1. There is no doubt but some of them knew what his Majesties Proposal was, for the Propagation of the Protestant Religion; being his Chaplains and chief Ministers about him, and some of them (if I am not mis-informed) made some Alterations and Amendments in the King's Declaration.

2. They do manifest an Opinion of the Reforming Divines, inconsistent with the Character which his Majesty gave of them, *as grave and learned Ministers*; and proceed with them according to a mean and uncharitable Opinion.

3. If they saw no necessity of any Alterations: 1. They dissented from the Judgment of as eminent Divines of the Church, as any in it. 2. They do not agree among themselves; for Mr. *Thorndike*, one of them, thought a Reformation was necessary to Union. *See First Plea, p. 22, &c. p. 32.*

3. They made some Alterations, such as were pleasing to them, though not satisfactory to others. 4. They destroy the King's Supposition, and the reason of his Proposal, for the Propagation of the Protestant Religion, Peace of the Church, satisfying tender Consciences, &c.

4. If they were *commissioned to advise*, &c. then had it not been a great Satisfaction to the whole Church, and an effectual way to silence the cavilling Opponents (if they were but Cavillers)? 1. To have answered their Reply. 2. to have petitioned his Majesty for a longer time, to have heard them out, but when eight Points were to be disputed, they had only time for one of them, being the last day of their Commission. It was about giving the Sacrament

if I am mistaken in any of these things, as I believe I am not, I shall be glad to be corrected by a true History of those Passages.

to Persons that scruple kneeling; about which there was a Division among themselves: Some of them held that we are not to refuse to give it to them that kneel not, but to give it to them that kneel: the words of the Rubrick being,—*The Minister shall take in both kinds himself,—and deliver it into the hands of the People kneeling*; as if the sense were, we are to give the Sacrament into the hands of the People kneeling; but are not forbid to give it to them that do not kneel: Dr. G. Dr. P. and Dr. S. were

for this lax Interpretation; others Dr. M. now Bishop of *Winchester*, was for the rigid sense, that the People must kneel, or we must not give it. And Dr. P. now Dean of *Salisbury*, offered to maintain against Mr. *Baxter*, that it was an Act of Mercy to those that scruple and refused to receive the Sacrament kneeling, to deny them the Communion of the Church therein; but the Commissioners of his

Now Lord Bishops of Ely, Chester, Norwich.
See Mr. B's Defence against Mr. Cheney, pag. 38.

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his own side restrained him. 4. How little did some of them care for the King's conjuring them, to acquiesce in, and submit to his Declaration? Or, tho his Majesty thought himself competent to propose (a Remedy) they thought him not, or else they would have advised a little further, having so great a charge from him, giving him hopes of their Compliance, and seeing the Peace and Settlement of the Church so much concerned in it, and the House of Commons approving of it, to whom they owed an Acknowledgment for their Service done for them, they might have made their Memorial blessed to all Generations, as Healers and Peace-makers.

And now it is plain that those who ruled most in those Councils, exercised a kind of Sovereignty over the Reason of all others, and waited for a Parliament and Convocation that should at once silence Objections, and answer Petitions.

Since those Transactions, the reforming Divines never had but one or two Opportunities of treating and composing our doleful Differences; the Composers agreed; but the House of Commons hearing of it, voted against bringing in a Bill of Comprehension, and the Reverend Dr. Burnet, in the Life of the Great Sir Matthew Hale, gives us the Reasons that prevailed at that time against it. And if I may not be too tedious, I will crave leave to transcribe his Lines.

But two Parties appeared vigorously against this De- Pag. 70, 71, 72, 73.
 sign (of Comprehension by Law) the one was of some
 zealous Clergy-Men, who thought it below the Dignity of the Church to alter
 Laws, and change Settlements for the sake of some, whom they esteemed Schis-
 matics; they also believed it was better to keep them out of the Church, than
 bring them into it, since a Faction upon that would arise in the Church,
 which they thought might be more dangerous than the Schism it self was. Be-
 sides, they said, if some things were now to be changed in compliance with the
 Humor of a Party, as soon as that was done, another Party might demand
 other Concessions, and there might be as good Reasons invented for these as for
 those; many such Concessions might also shake those of our own Communion,
 and tempt them to forsake us, and go over to the Church of Rome, pretending
 that we changed so often, that they were thereby inclined to be of a Church that
 was constant and true to her self; and these Reasons wrought on the far greater
 part of the House of Commons —. There were others that opposed it upon very
 different Ends: They designed to shelter the Papists from the Execution of the
 Law, and saw clearly that nothing would bring in Popery so well as a Toleration;
 but to tolerate Popery bare-faced, would have startled the Nation too much,
 so it was necessary to hinder all the Propositions for Union, seeing the keeping up
 the Differences was the best colour they could find, for getting the Toleration to
 pass, only as slackening the Laws against Dissenters, whose Numbers and Wealth

made

made it adviseable to have some regard to them; and under this pretence Popery might have crept in more covered, and less regarded: so these Councils being more acceptable to some concealed Papists then in Power, as has since appeared too evidently, the whole Project for Comprehension was let fall, and those who had set it afoot, came to be looked on with an evil Eye, as secret Favourers of Dissenters, Underminers of the Church, and every thing else that Jealousy and Dislike could cast on them.

I do not question but this excellent Historian hath given us a faithful account of the Reasons against Comprehension, as he received them from those eminent Persons engaged in it, or some that knew them; and I will make bold to cast some Reflections upon them.

1. On the one part some zealous Church-men, who thought it below the Dignity of the Church to alter Laws, &c. But when it is more agreeable to their Spirit and Ends, it is no Indignity to change moderate Laws into more severe; nor, to practise arbitrarily beyond Laws.

2. They who rationally and conscienciously dissent, are esteemed Schismatics: but retaining all other their Opinions and Principles, and abating the rigor of their Dissent, by conforming, would they be of the Church, or still esteemed Schismatics? By this Notion, the Conformist, *qua talis*, is no Schismatick; and the Nonconformist, *quatenus* such, is a Schismatick. Conformity takes away all name of Schism: But then the Question might be, Whether the *Nonconformist* be a State-schismatick, or a Church-schismatick? and, whether he was a Schismatick, when he treated about, and petitioned for Peace and Union? and what hath made him to be one since?

3. They are afraid of Faction: but do those Fears arise from a Catholick or a Factious Spirit? Are there not factious Spirits in the Church, that harbour factious Affections, and utter factious Words, contrary to true Charity?

4. And what if other Parties might demand Concessions? Either those Concessions were rational, becoming the Wisdom, Peaceableness, and Grace of the Church, or not; methinks it's a Royal Dignity in the Church, to make reasonable Concessions: if they are unreasonable, unchristian, impious and the like, the Church may deny them with Honour. But these Sons and Fathers, represent the Church like a stately Lady that keeps Chamber, and must not be spoken to.

5. But really, are there such among us, as taking Offence, might go over to the Church of Rome, *constant and true to her self*? How much do they owe to the *Nonconformists* for their Company and Communion! How inclinable are they to Rome, that are ready to depart upon small Concessions! The Constancy of the Church of Rome, is as inseparable a Property

Property of hers, as her Infallibility. Methinks this is much to the Dishonour of many of our Church, and much to the Honour of the *Nonconformists*, that whatever they suffer, there is no danger that they will turn Papists: But weak Reasons have great force in them, when they that are narrow in their Charity, and powerful in Place, have the Management of them.

6. The World is too apt to be jealous; but have not the *Nonconformists* some Reason to be jealous of this sort of zealous Clergy-men, that there is some Agreement, or Bargain between them and the Friends and Kinsmen of the Church of *Rome*? that both shall agree to keep the *Nonconformists* out? And is not the Church of *Rome* better conditioned, and better natured than these zealous Clergy-men? for there is not a *Nonconformist* but may be entertained among them, without fear of encreasing a Faction.

7. It is not a very doubtful thing, whether our zealous Clergy-men are the best or the worst sort of our Clergy, that argue so stily against a legal Comprehension of the Orthodox *Nonconformists*, with Reasons of so little weight, or that are so little sensible of the Usefulness, and Serviceableness of the Abilities of the *Nonconformists*, to the great and crying need of Souls.

8. This is a Vindication of the *Nonconformists* from bringing in of Popery; for the way of getting into the Papists hath been the shutting out of them; they hope to get by a Toleration. There would be no colourable Reasons for a Toleration, if it were not a pretended Favour to the *Nonconformists*. Take away Nonconformity as much as you can, and you take away the fairest pretence for a Toleration. They that appear against the uniting of Protestants upon Catholick Terms, serve the Popish Turn and Interest, and are effectually ill Friends to the Protestant Interest, and by Consequence our excluding Impositions do more real Hurt than Good, to the Protestant Church of *England*.

9. The dissenting Protestants may know who are their Friends, and who their Enemies, and what Potent Enemies they have, they have the Zealous Clergy against them, and the Politick Potent Papist.

10. We see the little Confidence or Assurance we have of the Constancy of many that are in the Communion of the Church of *England*; for if the receiving of the Protestant Dissenters upon Catholick Terms, be hazardous of losing, or of the revolt of them to the Church of *Rome*, as the more constant and true to her self, then what will become of them, if Popery should so far obtain, as to be able to give them Countenance and Favour? for if they are so inclinable to revolt for the Condescensions of the Church, in some things extra-essential to the Church,

upon shew of Inconstancy, what would they be, when our Church is like to be lost, or suppress?

11. Whether there is not a latent untrusty Party of schismatical Formalists in the Church, that are Schismatics *depositive*? for it seems they cannot bear the Reconciliation, and Restitution of the ejected; and if they are upon that in danger of apostatizing to the Church of *Rome*, are they not in danger of becoming the rankest Schismatics in the World, by returning Members of an apostate, schismatical Church, the Mother of Schisms?

12. By this, among other Reasons, I am convinced that it is the Duty of all sound and sincere Protestants of the Church of *England*, to pray for and by all peaceable ways to endeavour the re-admission of all sound Protestant Dissenters, and a Catholick Union of us all. And I am convinced the *learned Bishop Cosins* saw the State of Religion, when he declared in his last Testament, that it was the great Duty of us all to unite. And how much we are bound to acknowledge, and with all due Honour to remember the Loyal and Christian Endeavours of our late Parliaments, to unite us. I did at first design to compare the foresaid Declaration, to which, if turned into an Act, the *Nonconformists* would have conformed; and the Act of Uniformity to which they cannot conform, for a further Illustration of the despised Case of the *Nonconformists*; but I hope there is enough spoken to inform the less knowing, and to confirm the more knowing, in their charitable Opinion of them. I have traced the divided Rivers to the Head of them; and for that reason, that Truth may appear. From all this you may see a Concord between the King proposing, and the House of Commons, by their Thanks, approving of it; and the major part of the *Nonconformists* ready to submit to it. On the other side, you see the Bishops and Doctors dissenting from the King and Commons (that restored them) and the reforming Divines, and not so concordant in their Sentiments and Opinions, as to denominate them unanimous, and could they have extended their Charity but wide enough, they had provided well for a more durable Peace, defended with Considerations, against which, but few would have drawn out the small Powers of their Mis-understandings, to give trouble to it. There was not an exact Uniformity in their Notions; some thought a Reformation necessary to the Church's Settlement; Mr. *Thorndike* wrote for it; and when the Commissioners on both sides, began to dispute, it was seasonably closed up; lest the Disagreements of the anti-reforming-side had more appeared; some of whom undertook the Conduct of others, under whom a Promoter of their Design, the Lord Chancellor *Hide*, appeared and acted; (who in the Year 1641, was Chair-man of the Committee against the Bishops;) others

others gave Reputation, but little Addition of Help; others were variously instrumental, some by their Learning, others with their eagerness, and others with their keen and inveterate Antipathy against some, if not all of the reforming side, and differed in as many Points from the Doctrine of the Church, as the *Nonconformists* differed from the Discipline and Ceremonies of the Church, and were doctrinal *Nonconformists*. And it is clear, that they did not humbly and brotherly advise, nor maturely debate the matters committed to them, and not doubting of an hopeful manageable Number of the succeeding Parliament, their Resolutions passed into an Act, they took no more notice of the King's Declaration, than to make an historical mention of it, that such a thing had been, but enact nothing commended by it, in mitigation or favour to the Dissenting-side, requiring more Conditions, and adding heavy Penalties, which that Parliament in the latter times of it would have abated; but it was too late, as was said else-where. This is the Act to which the *Nonconformists* cannot conform; and they have given such Reasons, and so many, for this passive Nonconformity, that as many good Men as I know, are sorry they have so much to say, and their disgusted Adversaries are displeased and incensed with them, and no Man is thought yet to give a full and sufficient Answer to them, being rather slighted than answered; or what the one takes in a strict and honest sense, the other is fain to expound in a very general, and well-meaning sense; according to one, more may conform than yet have conformed, according to the other, there are but few, if any, that have conformed, in my acquaintance. This being in part spoken to in the *First Plea*, I cannot stay any longer upon this Head, but pass to the other Consideration of Nonconformity.

2. Nonconformity taken *actively and positively*; and that is preaching and performing other Religious Exercises, as it is commonly said, contrary to Law, by forbidden Men, and in a disallowed way. And for this several Nonconformist Ministers are at this time hunted, molested, and admonished, according to the strictest Form of Law, in order to Banishment with Abjuration, or to be prosecuted as Felons, in case of their Obstinacy and Refusal: Some of them have apologized for their preaching in such a manner, that if they are not answered in a rational, peaceable convincing way, they will not be ased as rational Men, and their Sufferings will be the more harsh, but not more hard to be born by them, because they have given Reasons for their Actions, which will appear to them either unanswerable, and that will make their Sufferings more comfortable; or else their Oppressors are the more implacable, and then they must the more meekly acquiesce in the divine Pleasure, as called forth to suffer. The Reverend Mr. Baxter hath written an Apology

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for the Nonconformist Ministry, dedicated to six of the Right Reverend Bishops, by Name, and a Petition, which deserves the serious perusal of their Lordships, and all other Ministers, Magistrates, and Gentlemen, that they may either satisfy them, or be satisfied by them. The Case is momentous, because the Salvation of Souls, the many personal and real Sufferings of Men in Bodies and Estates, the healing of Divisions, and settling of the Church, are unconceivably touched, and concerned in it: Mr. *John Troughton* hath written a Book with the same Title, upon the same Argument. And altho the Right Reverend Bishop of *Cork* hath done well in dealing faithfully with Mr. *B.* he did ill in not dealing fairly with that Book, and worse in exposing him as incapable, unfit to propose Terms of Peace; by which I think that Excellent Bishop hath not seen his *Terms of Concord*, 2d part.

And this being stated, let us modestly consider:

1. Whether this their positive Nonconformity be not capable of an Apology?

2. Whether it be not an hard case to silence, suppress, and punish them for endeavouring the Good of precious Souls?

For the first;

1. No Christian should doubt that the Office of the Ministry is originally from Jesus Christ, and not of Men. The extraordinary and ordinary Office of the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments are derived from the same Divine Supreme Authority. He that made the Apostles

able Ministers of the New-Testament, hath made, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5, 6. and makes all other lawful, fitted, and faithful Ministers, Ministers of the New-Testament; it is

their Gift, and their Learning, their Office and Work, to declare and publish that New-Testament, or Covenant of Grace, the Commands, Conditions, Priviledges, and Promises of it, to call and invite Sinners to it, to accept of the Grace therein revealed, to submit to the Commands of it, perform the Conditions and Duties required; to make them thereby capable of the Priviledges and Promises annexed to it, and to train up; edify, build, comfort, and perfect all that are in it. This is an Office necessary, useful and proper to his Kingdom.

2. They who are called and sent by Christ, and according to his Mind, are qualified, prepared and instructed for their Work and Office, by the Holy Ghost, who was promised and sent by Jesus Christ.

3. Being in some lower measure at first prepared and fitted for their Work; the Holy Ghost is the prime, and effectual *Mover* of them to exercise those

Qui fecit nos idoneos Ministros N. T. quomodo fecit? per Spiritum sanctum tanquam per Principium effectivum; per Gratiam Spiritus sancti tanquam per principium formal, E. i. f. Davanantius in c. p. 1. ad Galoss. v. 22.

those Gifts which they have received in the Service of their Master in Heaven, Jesus Christ. And this that great and solemn Interrogatory, which requires a sincere, sensible, solemn, and serious Answer, our Ordination doth put out of doubt. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, *The ordering of* to take upon you this Office, &c? *Ans.* 1 *Deacons.* trust so.

4. Being prepared and moved by the Holy Ghost, they offer themselves unto, and are called by some in a Church (where a Church is constituted) to exercise those Abilities, received from Christ by the Holy Spirit, for the Ends of the Gospel, the Salvation of immortal Souls.

5. All that the Bishops and Pastors of the Church are required to do, or can do as Ordainers, is, to try their Fitness and Disposition, and finding them fit, to approve and separate them to the Office of the Ministry, to declare them to have Authority, to exhort them to Diligence and Faithfulness in their Office, and to testify this to the Church.

6. No Bishop or Pastor can justly refuse, and justify the refusal before Jesus Christ, to whom they must give an account, of any Person duly qualified with necessary Qualifications for the Ministry; for it is a Sin to refuse him, whom Christ hath by his Spirit fitted for, and excited to his Work by his Spirit.

7. As long as their Gifts and Abilities are continued, and the Holy Ghost doth continue his gracious Motions and Assistances, so long these Ministers must continue in the Exercise, and discharge of their Office; for there is the same Reason to continue them, as there was to admit them, they continuing the same.

8. Their fitness for the Work of the Ministry consisting in soundness of Knowledge and Faith, aptness to teach, gift of Utterance, declared Resolutions, and undertaking to teach and do what Christ hath commanded, with Perseverance therein, as a Guide and Example to the Flock, are sufficient Conditions of admittance into the Ministry of the Gospel. To do all things decently and in order, and to Edification, are necessary by the Law of Christ's Kingdom, and not indifferent. It may well be questioned, whether any Man otherwise fitted for the Ministry, should be refused, because he refuseth to subscribe, vow, promise, declare, to any doubtful, controverted Conditions of Admission or Continuance; which are commonly invented by controversial, contentious, and impetuous Men, who do not only propose their Conceptions to others, but make them a Standard and Measure to regulate other Mens Minds, and Practices; and not only so, but think it meet, that all shall be punished that disagree, and dissent from them.

For the Confirmation of these things, with the Authority of the Church of *England*; Let us observe the Form of ordering Priests and Deacons: The *Preface* saith, 'The Bishop knowing either by himself, or by sufficient Testimony any Person to be of vertuous Conversation, and without Crime, and after Examination and Trial, finding him learned in the Latine Tongue, and sufficiently instructed in Holy Scripture, may — admit him Deacon —. The Bishop saith to the Arch-Deacon, Take heed that the Persons, whom you present unto us, be apt and meet for their Learning, and Godly Conversation —. The Bishop examines them in the presence of all the People — Do you trust you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office —? Do you think you are truly called according to the Will of our Lord Jesus Christ —? Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scripture of the Old and New Testament? Then opening his Office, he asks him, Will you do this gladly and willingly? Will you apply your Diligence to frame and fashion your own Lives, and of your Families, according to the Doctrine of Christ, and be Examples of the Flock of Christ —? The other Question relates to the Government of this Church, as Obedience to the Ordinary, and his godly Admonitions, which is a local Condition, in order to their Admission under our Church-form of Government, which is disputed by some of the Parties when any is presented to the Priest-hood: The Bishop cautions the Arch-Deacon; 'Take heed that the Persons whom you present unto us, be apt and meet, for their Learning and godly Conversation, to exercise their Ministry duly, to the honour of God, and the edifying his Church —. I think them so to be: Then shall the Bishop say unto the People, Good People, these are they whom we purpose, God willing, to receive this day unto the Holy Office of Priest-hood; for after due Examination we find not to the contrary, but that they be lawfully called to their Function and Ministry, and that they be Persons meet for the same.

Note from this, that Learning and Godly Conversation are the constituting Qualifications of a Man lawfully called to the Function of the Ministry.

In the Collect afterwards, they pray God to replenish them with the Truth of his Doctrine, adorn them with Innocency of Life, that both by Word and good Example, they may faithfully serve him in this Office, &c. Then follow the Epistle and Gospel; after which the Oath of Supremacy is given, and after that, an Exhortation to remember their high Dignity, and weight of their Charge, i. e. to be Messengers, Watchmen, Stewards of the Lord, to teach, premonish, feed, provide for the Lord's Family, to seek Christ's Sheep that are dispersed abroad,

abroad, and for his Children, who are in the midst of this naughty World, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. Have always printed in your Memories, how great a Treasure is committed to your Charge, the Sheep of Christ, bought with his Death — the Congregation which you serve is his Spouse and his Body —. And if it shall happen any Member of that Church take any hurt by your Negligence, ye know the Greatness of the Fault, and also the horrible Punishment that will ensue—. See that you never cease your Labour, your Care and Diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, to bring all under your Charge, to Agreement in Faith, and Ripeness of Age in Christ, that there be no Error in Religion, or Vicefulness of Life—; ye ought to pray earnestly for his holy Spirit—, consider how studious you ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures, and framing your Manners, and of yours, according to the Scriptures; and for this Cause ye ought to lay aside all worldly Cares and Studies; we have good hope that you have clearly determined by God's Grace, to give your selves wholly to this Office, whereunto it hath pleased God to call you, &c.

Covetous Non-Residents, and negligent Residents is hereby condemned, and a personal Inspection required, which some of our Brethren call Gossiping; others Conventicling.

This is enough to prove their Fitness and their Call to the Ministry; and such as are thus fitted, are admitted and ordained.

9. It is so far from being any part of their Office, that it is altogether inconsistent with it, to disturb the Peace, or sow Sedition against Heathen Magistrates, or to derogate from their Authority, much more to do any such thing against Christian Magistrates that profess the Truth, to whom they are engaged by more and stricter Bonds.

10. Their Persons and Estates are subject to the Magistrates Power and Laws, their Consciences to God, and in him and for him, to them as his Ordinance; but to require more of them, than of other Subjects, carries in it a vehement Suspicion, injurious to Religion, because a Suspicion of them more than others.

11. They cannot impose themselves upon any People, as their Teachers, but if any are desirous of their Labours, or accept their Pains, and find benefit thereby, how can they that are given to the Work, refuse to instruct and minister to them, any more than Paul and Silas, when constrained by the importunity of Lydia? Acts 16. 15. Will it not instil an ill Opinion of our Rulers, and Laws, if they shall say, Good People, I would preach, instruct, exhort, and comfort you, but I dare not, I am forbidden, and it may cost me my Liberty, and more than I am worth? Would it not be a sowing of Sedition among the People, to tell them, Orthodox and faithful, and skilful Preachers dare

dare not preach the Truth, nor not in Corners, except to a very few!

12. Their Office is Divine, and their Calling not of Men, but of God, their chief Encouragements are spiritual and heavenly, but they ought to be protected, encouraged, and maintained, with all needful and competent Subsistence, for their bodily and ministerial Support, and Comfort in their Work, and live of the Gospel.

13. The Temporalities in the Donation of the Supream Powers, or private Patronage, may be given to whom they please, but still as accountable to God; they should not be denied to Persons fitted for the Work of the Ministry, nor given to Men more suitable to their Fancies, than the Mind of God: Magistrates and Patrons have Rules for their Direction, as Inferiours have for theirs.

14. And therefore Superiours have need of great Wisdom and Wariness to discern who are fit and worthy, and who not, and what are the necessary Conditions to capacitate Men, for the temporal Rewards and Subsistence, lest by their unnecessary Jealousy, and Arbitrary Qualifications, they reject Men that are furnished with the most necessary Qualifications of Learning, and Holiness, which contain Peace and Honesty. Men that fear a Net, may starve for want of Corn: It is hard Fare to swallow and eat Scruples of Conscience.

15. Governours may deprive Ministers of their Temporal Maintenance, remove them from their Stations for their Non-compliance with their Laws and Orders, but no humane Power can deprive them of what they could not give them, nor take away from them, *viz.* their ministerial Abilities and Authority. I think it clear, nothing can eject them, or un-make them, but the Privation of those things which could make them Ministers.

The Crimes for which Ministers might be deposed are, either Impiety, Unrighteousness, and Immorality, few in Number, but gross in Quality.

And lest I be thought too positive, let me propound some Questions.

1. Whether those Men who are fitted by Christ for the Ministry, that are moved and assisted by the Holy Ghost, that are devoted to Christ and his Work, that are invited to preach by many, that are moved with Compassion towards many People that want, that have had Success in their Labours, are not obliged in Conscience to preach the Gospel, as often, as much, and to as many as they can?

2. Whether it be a sufficient Reason to refuse to admit such, otherwise able and worthy Men, or to eject and silence them, because they cannot subscribe, swear, declare, what a few Men, without asking Counsel and

and Direction of God by solemn Fasting and Prayer, or by Deliberations with the fairly and equally chosen Representatives of the whole Church, did resolutely carry on by ways and Instruments of their procuring? We have our Ember Weeks for Ordination; and why not before framing Conditions, upon which, Continuance or Deprivation did depend of many hundreds of able Ministers? I do not question the lawful Authority of Governours, or detract from Order and Government; but the Question is, Whether Rulers should wholly reject such Men as are duly qualified with Gifts necessary for the Office of the Ministry, who refuse no Catholick, but Conditions dubious in their Sense, and unnecessary in their nature and kind?

3. But granting that the Rulers of the Church, can justify to Christ their Rejection of qualified Men, which is not past doubt, from those publick Stations and Endowments of the Church and charge of Souls; yet what Harm or Danger can come to precious Souls by the profitable and wholesome Labours of learned, judicious and sound Christian Ministers, endowed with the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Catholick Church? Why should not they preach the Word? Why may not People hear them? Or, why should not we accept their Help, and repute them our Fellow-Labourers, and rejoyce in their Success?

4. Have any of us that conform, heard any of them vent in the Pulpits in former times, while they had the Liberty of their Pulpits, any disloyal, or rebellious Doctrine? any Fanaticism inconsistent with sound Reason, and the Oracles of God, the Faith of the Catholick, or Reformed Churches? Name the Men, admonish them, labour to reclaim them, and testify against them. If they were such Seeds-men, why did not the Church after her Restitution cite them, and proceed against them to Excommunication and Ejection, as intolerable Men? But on the contrary, Do we not remember our selves, and have we not heard others, remember what manner of Men they were, both in the Universities and Countries? Do we not remember some of them, as Governours of Colledges, as Tutors, as Preachers in the University, City and Country? and why may not they, who have been our Teachers, teach others? by whom we are saved and effectually called, by whom we believed, become blessed Instruments, and Ministers, by whom others may believe, be born again, and saved. Is Nonconformity an Extinction of the Spirit of Light, Truth, Purity, and Power in them? Doth Nonconformity separate them from Christ? Are they none of his, because they cannot submit to the Inventions of some, who were not so much as Bishops, when they vehemently concurred to bring us to this pass? and were restless to pass some of their particular Problems

into a Law, to which all Men must declare Assent, if the Assent be declared in their sense. As I should think it a great Sin, not to succour my Father or Brother in want and distress; so I do think it a great Sin not to relieve my Fathers and Brethren in Jesus Christ, by a Faithful Testimony, and Apology, when they are oppressed, and in danger

*The like is gratefully
acknowledged by the
Godly and Reverend
Bishop of Cork, of a
Nonconformist, p. 73.*

of Prisons, Poverty, and many Miseries. And let it be noted, that I am obliged to acknowledg the Efficacy of the Holy Spirit upon the preaching of several of them, towards my Salvation; and having known the proof, and Power of Christ speaking in them, I dare not deny them before Men, lest I

also deny Christ Jesus my Saviour in them. There are several learned, holy, laborious, and successful Ministers that were our Instructors in our younger time, who have conformed, but not so many as refused to conform, within my Knowledge, as I could name, but for offending them, and some other Reasons of my Silence, and in those times of Liberty, these seemed to be all of one Mind in the Lord. I and many more rejoiced in their Light; and some of them were among Preachers, as Solomon saith, *As the Apple-Tree is among the Trees of the Wood*; we sat under their Shadow with great Delight, and their Fruit was pleasant to our Taste. I could name the wise Master-builders that laid the Foundation, other than which no Man can lay; I could name the *Paul*, and the *Apollos*, and the *Peters* that preached to the Heart, the *Barnabas* and the *Boanerges*; the Friends of the Bridegroom, that wooed and besought us, and would not be denied till our Souls had received Christ Jesus the Lord: some of them are at rest in the Lord, and let their Names be blessed; and others are in the Cloud, and Storm, and Warfare; and to add Bonds to their many Afflictions is no small unkindness to Religion. We know of what Spirit they were, that digg'd up the Bodies of *Wickliff*, and other Saints; it is not hard to find of what Spirit they are, that rake into the Ashes of the Dead, and sprinkle them with their profane Wit, which is like Salt that has lost its Savour, not good for the Dung-hill; it proceeds not from that Charity which covers a multitude of Sins.

5. Whether they who are called of God to the Work of the Ministry, should forsake and renounce their Calling, and look upon themselves as Lay-men, and be but as Lay-men, because they are ejected out of their Places, and conform not to the Injunctions of the Law? Many of the *Nonconformists* have Episcopal Ordination; shall they forbear all Ministerial Acts, and do but what any Master of a Family should do, instruct their own Family, and admit four more to a Participation of the Benefit? shall they renounce their Calling, who
declared

declared their Trust, that they were moved by the Holy Ghost, to take the Office (of Deacon) whom the Arch-Deacon declared, when presented to the Priesthood, he thought them apt and meet for their Learning and godly Conversation; and the Bishop declared, after due Examination, We find not the contrary, but that *they be lawfully called to their Function*; for whom the Bishop prayed, and whom he hoped, that they have determined by God's Grace to give *themselves wholly to this Office, wherunto God hath called them*; and also called to declare and profess (before God, Angels, and the Congregation) that they were truly called according to the Will of the Lord Jesus Christ, give faithful Diligence always to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and this Church received according to the Commandments of God; to drive away erroneous Doctrines, to use both publick and private Monitions and Exhortations to sick and whole within your Cures, as need shall require, &c. Can any discharge them from God's Call, but God that called them? Can they sit still, and do no Ministerial Work, that have been devoted to the Ministry, that have been prayed for, and exhorted to give themselves wholly to it? Or do they cease to be Ministers, except it be in that Cure to which they were instituted and inducted? Then are we made, tho' not Independent, yet Congregational Ministers, and are Ministers only in that particular Congregation? If they ought not to renounce their Ministry, then they may preach, and do other Ministerial Offices, as they have opportunity. Others are not Episcopally ordained; but if they are moved by the Holy Ghost, are learned, exercised in the Scriptures, are of Godly Conversation, and give themselves to the Work, are not they called of God? If not, what's the meaning of the fore-cited Word in the ordering of Priests and Deacons; 'Then shall the Bishop say unto the People, Good People, these are they whom we purpose, God willing, to receive this day unto the Office of Priesthood: For after due Examination we find not the contrary, but that they be lawfully called to their Function and Ministry, and be persons meet for the same —? Doth not the Bishop look upon them as internally called, and that internal Calling declared and signified, and therefore receives them? And tho' they have not Episcopal Imposition of Hands; if they have Imposition of Hands of Presbyters, and are set apart by Fasting and Prayer, are they not more than Lay-men, or private Believers? They who say they are but Lay-men, have no better Reasons than the Romanists had, who called our Reformed Bishops, no true Bishops, nor Priests. Anthony Champney dedicated, or rather directed his Book of the Vocation of Bishops, &c. to Arch-Bishop Abbot, with no higher

*These other Arguments
are urged by heavenly
Mr. Jos. Allen, say to
Archbishops, &c.*

First, when *Dr. George Abbot*, called *Arch-bishop of Canterbury*. And the most eminent Defenders of our Protestant Religion, tho they asserted a Power of Ordination to reside in the Bishops, as without whom

there was no regular Ordination: yet they justified the calling of Foreign Divines and Churches by Presbyters without Bishops, and the Reasons they used to vindicate them, will serve to vindicate those among us, that have no other.

And when as he (the Jesuit) saith, "They (Luther and Calvin) succeeded no Apostolick Bishops, neither had any Calling to preach that new Faith."

I answer, That for the External Succession, whereof we have spoken, we care not: it is sufficient that in Doctrine they succeeded the Apostles, and primitive Churches.

It is the Custom of the Catholick Church, *ut Episcopi legitime ordinant, sed quis a Presbytero ordinatus fuerit, Ordinatio illa etiam vera est, ex ejusdem Ecclesie Catholice publico*. With the Reverend Bishop *Carlton* and Bishop *Bilston*, that learned Defender of Bishops *Philander Phil.* "The Apostles Commission we know, but yours we do not know."

Theop. You cannot be ignorant of ours, if you know theirs, so long as we teach the same Doctrine which they did, we have the same Power and Authority to preach which they had, &c.

If these Answers of the learned Defenders of the Protestant Cause, are not true and catholick, they are not good, nor sufficient: if they are good against the Papists, they are strong for our Protestant dissenting-Preachers; who, if they be but Lay-men, should be ordained: but the very word Re-ordination doth imply an Ordination.

And Ordination is not to be repeated, altho it be disorderly and out of Course, any more than Baptism in the Catholick Church, saith the same Reverend Bishop *Carlton*.

I must keep my self to Generals, for I do not know the particular Cases, Scruples and Reasons of particular Persons. Some have taken Episcopal Ordination, that cannot conform, that were ordained by Presbyters before; those that have not, scruple Re-ordination, lest they should null their former, and their Administrations, and plead for themselves, that they were innocent from the Exclusion of the Bishops. And what if some sought Episcopal Ordination, and were refused, tho sufficiently recommended? The most that were ordained, were ordained by an Irish Bishop in London, which needed not, if all our

English Bishops had been willing to ordain, I could name one Bishop, that did refuse to ordain, that lived most conveniently for Access; and the Ordination of that * *Agudoensis*, * *An Irish Bishop*. was not Canonical, nor free from just Offence.

But further, even they who have the internal Call, consisting of good Learning, Knowledge in the Scriptures, and are of a good exemplary Conversation, and moved by the Spirit, are not to be reckoned as Lay-men, but next to Presbyters or Ministers, according to the declared Judgment of great and eminent Protestants. Arch-bishop Abbot added this Observation, to the 9th Section of the second Chapter, *De Circumcisione & Baptismo*. *Martin* *Bucer* saith, that some of the Lay-men, were admitted to read and interpret the Holy Scriptures, in the Primitive and purer Church, which they sometimes did perform in the presence of the Bishops; and nameth *Origen* and others; namely, such in whom the singular Gifts of the Holy Spirit did appear, that it might be manifest to the Rectors of the Churches, that their Labour in instructing the People in the Mysteries of the Faith, would not a little profit them. And saith he, If any Man add, what the truly learned *Hieron Zanchius* speaks indefinitely —, when from the Practice of the purer Church, they who were not in Holy Orders, did preach the Gospel. We answer, There is a difference to be made between the simple Lay-man, or the common sort, to whom Power is given in the *Romish* Church to baptize, and them who are *inftar Ministrorum Evangeliz*; who are like the Ministers of the Gospel; and who not only excel the common sort of Men, for their Learning in holy things, but are called by the special, publick and common Decree of the Bishop, and then that are over the Congregation, publickly to interpret Scripture. And these, and not others, the words of *Bucer* do note or point at, &c. *Istos ego non audeo, ad ordinariorum, & vulgarium Laicorum Conditiones revocare cum ad Presbyteros tam prope accedant*. I dare not bring down these to the Condition of ordinary, and vulgar Lay-men, that come so near to Presbyters (or Ministers) saith the learned Abbot of this sort; there are scarce any to be found at this day (saith he) for the multitude of them that serve in Churches. And whether *Tertullian* and *Hieron* speak of such as these, that were permitted to baptize, I leave to the Judgment of the Learned.

By these Testimonies we see how different the Judgment of too many of this present Age is, from the Judgment and Candor of the most venerable Writers of former times. Now Schismatick is but a common Name to distinguish the *Nonconformists* from the Church-men; and one

Questiones Res. diff. cussa; Sc. per Geom. Abbatium, p. 109.

Bucer in Epist. ad Episcopos c. 4.

*Defence of Dr. Stil-
lingfleet, pag. 69.*

as in a fit of Kindness is far from charging them with Schism, if they would not leave the Church, but conform as *Lay-men*, as the *Nonconformists* did. But did the old *Nonconformists* conform as *Lay-men*?

So I suppose we all conform but as *Lay-men*, when we do not officiate as Ministers; we answer as People answer, and do no more than People do. But I think the old *Nonconformists* did reckon themselves when they left their Livings, as much, and as truly Ministers, as they did when they had their Livings, and did preach publicly by Connivance, as Ministers in most Counties. Our present *Nonconformists* would thankfully accept the Favour, which most of the old did enjoy, till Conformity grew too hot even for many Conformists; I need not name the Times, nor the Planets that then bore Rule.

But who can forbear lamenting the Condition of our Brethren, and of multitudes of precious Souls! Is there any Man qualified with a Competency of Learning, that can say, he is moved by the holy Ghost? that leads a good Life? that promiseth to give himself to the Work of God? but shall be acknowledged by the Ordainer, to be called of God, even before he layeth on his Hands? but if this very same Man shall afterwards scruple, or refuse, to assent to all and every thing, &c. he shall no longer be accounted by some Men, as a Man called of God, but must become again as a Lay-man, or else he cannot escape being a Schismatick: which is enough to tempt a Man to think, that these make the Gift of Subscribing, and the Faculty of assenting and consenting to other Mens Inventions, to be the essentialling and constituting Qualification of a Minister, without which, tho he be never so well furnished with other Gifts, he shall be accounted but a Lay-man, and must do no more than a Lay-man, or else there's no avoiding the odious Crime of Schism. And hence this Notion may arise, like a Meteor in the Firmament of the Church, to be gazed upon, and afford matter of Observation, if not of Predication. That Conformity to an Ordinance of Men doth effectually make a Minister of Jesus Christ, in the Church of *England*; and while he continueth in the same Mind he was in, at 24 Years of Age, all his life-time, and be not prepared to submit to all after-Devices, that may be added, he shall fall from the Grace and Dignity of his Ordination and Ministry, and return to his first simple Being, of remotely disposed matter of meer Laity. If it be said, no; for he being once ordained, he is a Minister of the Universal Church. Well, that's true; but if he cannot conform to every Point, then he cannot exercise his Ministry in this Church: and then the Consequence is obvious; such are the Conditions of the exercise of the Ministry in the Church of *England* at this day, that a Minister of the Universal Church cannot exercise his Office, no not

in any Chappel of Ease in this Kingdom, except he submit to them; and if he cannot exercise his Ministry, after he is called unto it, what doeth it profit him to be a Minister? or what is the Church the better for his Office? If one acknowledged to be a Minister of the Universal Church, may not administer in a particular Church, then is it not because that particular Church requires some Conditions, which are not so large as the Rules and Conditions of the Universal Church? This may put us to search whether different Rules, stricter Laws prescribed, as Conditions of Entrance and Continuance in the Ministry, and Church-Communion, be not the Cause or Occasion of Schisms in particular Churches? These Catholick Rules and Conditions are to be taken, and received from the Apostles, who went into all the World to gather, and to found Christian Churches. They gave us Laws enow to govern any particular Church, who were sent into all the World: And no Decrees of General Councils are of equal Observation with the Scriptures, not only because of their Sanctity, but because of their Universality; and the very Errors and Mistakes of them in some Particulars are tolerable, that do what they can to find out and follow the Will of God in Scripture.

And this Diversity can be no Inconvenience to any Church, because of the plain Injunctions and Commands of keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, of loving, and forbearing one another in Love.

But to return, What shall we say? Are they but Lay-men, or but *grass* Lay-men, that were once ordained by *Bishops*? or what if others can prove by the Holy Scriptures, and the Catholick Rules of Faith, that they are called of God, and make proof of their Gifts, which make them serviceable to the Souls of poor Sinners, and only scruple some late implicating perplexing Terms, what shall they do in this case? They would enter into the Service, according to the uncontroverted general Rules of Christ, the Sovereign Law-giver of his Church; but that will not serve the turn, they must do more: They have received Gifts from the Spirit, of the same nature with other Ministers, they'll submit their Gifts to the Trial, to free them from the Fanaticism imputed to them. These Gifts are for some use; they are their Talents, and they must give an account of them to the Giver of them at his appearing. Whither can any of them go, and not be serviceable? Is there any City, Town, Parish, or noble Family in England, in which there is not need, or where such as they may not be exceeding profitable? but in some Places, there is a crying need! O how few, few Labourers are there in very large Fields! yea, as offensive as the presence of the Brethren are in many places, there is not an useless Man among them; nor one place hardly where is not need, if not extreme need. What shall they do? conform to the Church

as Lay-men only ! What if the Bottle be so full, that its ready to burst ? what if the Fire of Zeal, true Zeal, kindle ? must they not speak with their Tongue ! What if the Breast be full, and they who were begotten in Christ Jesus by their Ministry, cry, cry to them ; *O give us of the sincere Milk of the Word !* shall they say, No, my Breast is full, but I must not draw it out ? What if they have Bread enough, and can divide it, and see a Company of poor Souls ready to starve, and pine for Want, and yet they must not give them a piece of Bread ? City Ministers are most quarellsome and contentious with them ; but if from their high Places they saw and knew but what I know, instead of charging them with Separation and Schism, they would beg of Authority, that they would send them into many places of the Land, which are more like a Wilderness, than the Garden of the Lord : but instead of doing this, some have written to prepare a prejudiced People to entertain them with Stones ; or beseech them to depart out of their Coasts ; and not to open their Doors to entertain them, or their Ears to hear them. Oh ! how are many of the Servants of God, true Subjects, able Preachers, at this day forced to hide, and many are as shy, and close to entertain them, as if they were Traitors, and the Hue and Cry were out against them !

But what if these Men cannot think themselves discharged of their Work, when their Hire is stopt ? they cannot but pity those that have no Shepherds, or not enow ; they cannot stop their Ears against the Cry of the poor ; what if Conscience cry, *Wo to me, if I preach not the Gospel !* O there are too many that never heard that Preaching in their Bosom : Some have pleaded that Wo concerned none but the Apostle ; what shall they do between two Woes ? Wo from Christ if I preach not, and Wo from Men if I preach !

Object. They must obey the Laws, obey Authority.

Ans. So they must, and, as far they can, they do.

Object. But they say, they must obey God rather than Men.

Ans. So did the Apostles, who taught Obedience to Governors. Neither may any godly Prince take it as any Dishonour to his Estate, to see God obeyed before him ; for he is not God, but the Minister of God, saith our Venerable Father, Bishop Jewel.

Object. But our King, and Magistrates, and Laws, are not such as They were, neither are our Conventiclers Apostles.

Ans. True, I cast no Reflections upon the King, but acknowledge his Life, and Protestancy to be singular Mercies and Priviledges. But if the first Christian Churches were planted, and the Faith preached where the Rulers

*Defence of the Apo-
logy, part 1. p. 20. of
my Edit.*

Rulers were Unbelievers, disaffected to it, and Persecuters of it; theⁿ Preachers that preach the Doctrine of the Apostles, and live according to the Gospel, may humbly expect, if not lay some Claim to a Privilege of preaching, and worshipping God, as near as they can discern according to his mind.

The Case of the Brethren is so clear in it self, that some in Power have no other colour for proceeding against them, than as Men that exercise another Religion, as I can produce, which clearly intimates, that it is unreasonable to proceed to Confiscations and Banishment against Men that profess the same Religion. And whereas Godliness and Honesty may claim Protection, they represent them as wicked and dishonest in the highest Degree, that is, seditious, and withdrawing the King's Subjects from their Allegiance, &c.

The Canon Law calls their divers Orders, Religion; but to Christians and Protestants there is but one Religion.

But this is the old Language, as the most Reverend Bishop Jewel writes, as objected against them, that we be fallen from the Catholick Church, and by a wicked Schism have shaken the whole World, and troubled the common Peace, and universal Quiet of the Church: and that as *Dathan* and *Abiram* conspired in times past against *Moses* and *Aaron*; even so we this day have renounced the Bishop of *Rome*, without any reasonable Cause.

Apolog. c. 2. Divis. 7. p. 21.

But let us see wherein our Brethren are to be blamed, or do any thing but what our King and Governours may allow, the Primitive Bishops of our Reformation being Judges.

The Religion of our Brethren is, *Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* 'It is the Religion of Christ, and not of 'Anti-christ. I reckon it cannot stand with the Prince's Duty to reverse 'this heavenly Decree; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, &c.* with 'establishing two Religions in one Realm; the 'first authorized by Christ, and bequeathed in his 'Testament to the Church; the next invented of 'Antichrist, and flatly repugnant to the Prophetical and Apostolical Scriptures—. [Our Brethren endeavour to keep strictly to the Scripture, and Christ, as Law-giver.]

Bishop Bifon of Subjection, Part 1. p. 21. Edit. 4^o.

'Then as the Minister must dispence the Word of Truth, be there- 'with offended and grieved who list; so the Magistrate may draw the 'Sword of Justice to compel, and punish such as 'be blindly led, and maliciously bent to resist 'sound Doctrine: Who then should be punished, Preachers? or they, or those Officers that trouble them?

Part 1. pag. 33.

Object. But the Magistrate is to be obeyed in all lawful things, and every particular Church hath power to ordain Ceremonies, so they be not contrary to God's Word.

Answer. No Man disputes the Magistrate's Power in commanding things good and necessary; the Doubt is concerning things which are indifferent, as some suppose, but not indifferent as the Dissenters suppose. Of things indifferent, hear the Judgment of the same learned Bishop: *We may not for things indifferent trouble the weak Minds of our Brethren; yet this Rule bindeth no Magistrate to remit the Punishment of Er-*

Ibid. Pag. 33.

ror and Infidelity, because God hath charged to suffer no kind of Evil unrevenge'd (and this is the greatest) whose Voice they must hear, whose Will they must obey, though they were sure thereby to scandalize never so many both Aliens and Subjects.

If they are things truly indifferent, then Governours may forbear to command them, whereas many do rationally scruple the Observation of them, and cannot without Sin, observe them. Condescension and Self-denial would rid Mens Consciences out of this Strait, between the Magistrate's Command, and the Dictates of Conscience.

Object. But by their Preaching, and separate Meetings, they break the Communion of the Church, and are guilty of Schism, and to tolerate them is to tolerate a Schism.

Answer. This is the great Clamor of the Accusers: but let us see where-
in Communion of Saints and Churches doth consist, and then we shall

*Ibid. Part 2. p. 223,
224.*

see what Schism. I cannot quote a more learned Doctor of this Church, or of greater Authority, than the same Reverend Bishop *Bilson*, he shall decide this Case.

'It is a most pernicious Fancy to think the Communion of Christ's Church depends upon the Pope's Person, or Regiment (let them that imagine one Universal Sovereign Power over the Church in our days, whether one or many, observe this Doctrine;) and that divers Nations and Countries differing by Customs, Laws, and Manners (so they hold one and the same Rule of Faith in the Bond of Peace) cannot be parts of the Catholic Church, Communicant one with another, and perfectly united in Spirit and Truth each to other; and fy on your Follies that rack your Creed, and rob Christ of his Honour, and the Church of all her Comfort and Security, whilst you make the Unity of Christ's Members to consist in Obedience to the Bishop of Rome, and not in Coherence with the Son of God!

'The Communion of Saints, and near dependance of the Godly each on other, and all of their Head, standeth not in external Rites, Customs, and

‘and Manners, as you would fashion out a Church observing the Pope’s Canons —; but in believing the same Truth, tasting of the same Grace, resting on the same Hope, calling on the same God, rejoicing in the same Spirit, whereby they be sealed, sanctified, and preserved against the day of Redemption —. The Communion of the Catholick Church is not broken by *diversity and variety of Rites, Customs, Laws, and Fashions*, which many Places and Countries have different each from other, except they be repugnant to Faith and Good-manners, as St. *Augustine ad Januarium, Irenaeus &c. Eusebius*, l. 5. c. 23. *Socrates*, l. 5. c. 22.

Simple Verity is the Band of Unity. *Jewel*. Bishop *Carlton* makes the Unity of the Church to consist in one Head, Christ; one Body, one Spirit, one Faith, or one Rule of Faith.

D. fence, p. 450. *Pix-lection*, de Ecclesiâ.

And if Unity consists in Uniformity in the same Form of Prayer, Liturgy, and Ceremonies, there was no such thing as Unity, there were as great Schisms in the Apostles days, as among our Brethren, according to the Judgment of the same learned Bishop *Bil-son* —. Some of their own might be so vain-glorious as in making their Prayers at the Lord’s Table (which was then done by Heart, and not after *any prescribed Order or Form*) to shew the Gift of Tongues —. In the publick Service of the Church, the Ministers and Elders, which were many, both Travellers, and there Dwellers, had every Man his Psalm, his Instruction, his Tongue, Revelation, or Interpretation, as the Spirit of Grace thought most expedient —. And other Order in the Divine Service in the Apostolick or Primitive Church, we read for certain of none, besides the Action of the Lord’s Supper, which the Apostles, and so no doubt all their Churches, always used in the end of their publick Meetings, but with no set Prayers, save only the Lord’s Prayer, as *Gregory* confesseth.

Ibid. fourth part, p. 619, 620, &c.

‘The rest of their Prayers, Blessings, and Thanks-givings, were in every place made by the Gift of the Holy Ghost, inspiring such as were set to teach and govern the Church. And you have long since their time, framed a Liturgy in *James’s* Name. *Pag.* 620.
‘— Yet for so much as the Church of Christ did not acknowledge it — your main Foundation is a Dream of your own, that the Church of *Corinth* had a prescribed number and order of Prayers pronounced by some one Chaplain, that said *Pag.* 621
‘his Lesson within-book, or might not go one Line beside
‘his *Missale* for any good —. Where the Christians under
‘the Apostles had in their Assemblies, first, prophecying, &c. declaring

‘of God’s Will, and revealing of his Word; at which the Infidels, and
 ‘new Converts unbaptized might be present: and next, Prayers and
 ‘Psalms, to celebrate the Goodness and Kindness of God, and to prepare
 ‘their Minds for the Lord’s Table, to which all the Faithful came with
 ‘one Consent of Heart and Voice, giving Thanks to God for their
 ‘Redemption, &c. And this was done by the mouths of such Pastors
 ‘and Ministers, as it pleased the Holy Ghost to direct and inspire for
 ‘that Function and Action. The People hearing, under-
 Pag. 622. ‘standing, and confirming their Prayers and Thanks with
 ‘saying, *Amen*: and other *Divine Service than this they had*
 Pag. 636. ‘*none* —. We do not think that *Basil* or *Chrysostom*, would
 ‘take upon them to make a new Form of Church-Service,
 ‘if *St. James* the Apostle had done it before them.

From this Testimony, it is clear, that if Uniformity in one Form of
 Worship, or Common-Prayer, and Ceremonies be necessary for Church-
 Union, then there was no Church-Union, or Catholick-Communion
 in the Apostolical-Churches, because there was no Form or Order of
 Divine Service set and prescribed: But there was the most Christian and
 Catholick Communion in that Diversity; therefore Catholick Union
 and Communion, without one prescribed and set Form.

And hence the Dissenting Brethren have the Countenance of an
 ancient venerable Bishop of *Winchester* for them, and to convince their
 Troublers for using a Worship different from the Liturgy of the Church
 of *England*. Prophe-ying, praying, praising God, are parts of God’s
 Worship, tho in differing Words and Method, they are the same Di-
 vine Worship. And who act nearest the Primitive Pattern of the
 Apostles, and purest times, they who worship God in Christ by the Spi-
 rit, or they who will not suffer them?

Object. But the Apostles and Teachers had the Guidance of the
 Spirit.

Ans. They had, but that Assistance which they had for performing
 the Worship of God, was not extraordinary, or peculiar to their Times;
 because Gospel-Worship was to be performed in
 all After-ages of the Church, and by Consequence,
 the Assistance of the Spirit was to continue to all
 Ministers in succeeding Ages, without whose Assis-
 tance we can do nothing. And the Holy Spirit
 doth continue to give Gifts and Graces to his Mini-
 sters and People: and if one Form were absolute-
 ly necessary for all Ages, it is a wonder that the
 Apostles did not leave us one. Form is but a mode, and to be used, or
 not used, as is most for Edification; and they that use it not, should

not condemn them that use it, and they who use it, should not, as I conceive, judg them as Schismatics that use it not, but joyn one with another.

Object. But it is a Disorder in the same Church and Government, and not to be born, it looks like a different Religion.

Answer. The Romanists have often charged the Church of England with permitting different Religions in the Nation: But let the same learned Bishop answer for me. * In England, the People, both Pag. 15.
 'strange and hege, worship God the Father in Spirit and
 'Truth, according to the Gospel of his Son; agreeing together in the
 'Substance of one Faith, and the right Order of Chrill's Sacraments:
 'Only Strangers are suffered in their Churches to use their own Tongue,
 'and retain their own Ceremonies, as be neither against Faith, nor
 'adverse to good Manners, and therefore, by St. Augustine's Judgment,
 'may go for indifferent, and may be born in Christian Unity, without Offence
 'or Confusion. — Oh! if this Doctrine were believed in our days, the
 People of God might be said to rest at Noon! And he was not singular.
In Doctrinâ & Fidei Orthodoxa Professione discordia inter nos nulla
 (saith the learned Crakenhorp of the Puritans)
Hac integrâ in Ritibus, & Disciplinâ discrimen foren-
dum utriq; scimus. Difference in Ceremonies and Defensione Eccles.
 Discipline was tolerable in their Opinion, but now Angl. contra Spa-
lat. c. 43. p. 254.
 intolerable. The Champions of the Church of
 England in former days against the Papists were moderate, when we
 know there was a different way of Discipline and Decency secretly practi-
 sed. If Doctrine be the direction of Practice, to be moderate in Do-
 ctrine, but severe in Practice and Execution, is to put out the Candle,
 and kindle a Fire; to preach Charity, but to shew no Mercy.

To draw towards a Conclusion; Let us but truly judg of the elder
Nonconformists with righteous Judgment.

1. Before his Majesty's wonderful Restauration, in all Countries and
 Places where they lived and preached, who did rebuke, reprove, exhort,
 and fulfil all parts of Ministers more than they? Who maintained Pro-
 testant Doctrines, preached for Conviction, Conversion, Holiness and
 Righteousness more than they? Who vindicated all Ordinances from
 some that pretended to live above them? Others that denied the ne-
 cessity and use of them? and from the Profanation of sacred Things?
 And who did more forwardly assist and concur to settle the Government
 upon ancient Foundations, and in the Inheritor of the Royal Throne?
 Who were more hated by impious Sects, or that laboured more to con-
 vince and reduce them, than they?

2. At that time, and since, how highly were they placed in the King's
 good Opinion? as is fully expressed in his Royal Declaration.

3. They:

3. They did shew a Forwardness and Zeal to settle the Church, denying their own private Opinions, to lay down solid Foundations for a Comprehensive Church.

4. When they quietly submitted to the Law of their Ejection; did they, did any of them sow Sedition, or ill Principles of Faction? was their Exhortation of deceit or guile? to incense their loving Auditors, or oblige and conjure them to any thing inconsistent with the Gospel? or unlike Men, as going from the Pulpit, to God's Tribunal, to give him an Account of their Doctrine, Faith, manner of Life? see any of their broken Notes, and Farewell-Sermons, printed much to their Disadvantage! Testify against them who can!

5. Except they had renounced their sacred Calling, and silenced themselves, who could have employed their Labours with more inoffensiveness to Authority, more Toil to themselves, and more Profit to precious Souls, and less Opposition to the publick than they did? (as will appear in Instances) An honourable Member (Sir H. C. Anno 1670, 71) in full Parliament took notice of it that there were no Conventicles: yes, they took pains to preach, when others were at rest in great Privacies and Solitudes. And let's be just: who hath made any Observation of People, and Affairs, that will not say, for one Schismatick we had had many, had it not been for their great Indultry; and who for all that are Schismaticks but they! It is not Thanks-worthy to keep poor weak Souls in the Faith and Truth, except they turn Lay-men, and all come up even to the Rails, i. e. to the height.

6. God and the King made their Assemblies so numerous and publick; God by a tremendous course of Judgments, yet remembring Mercy: The King, after 12 Years Experience of fruitless Severity, sent out his Declaration of Indulgence. Some of themselves have published the Providence of God, but it is not worth the noting; and they that are resolved on their way, will not be hindred by making Observation, even of the Works of God. When God sent a dreadful Plague, and the Angel stood over London with his drawn Sword, as our Jerusalem; then the King, and Court, and Parliament removed to Oxford; and when many Churches were empty, God stirred up many of the Nonconformists to go and preach up and down; then they had the use of Churches, and numerous Assemblies, and gained many Souls to God by them, and drew the Hearts of a desolate People to themselves, which could never since be alienated from them. And when the Popish Faction opposed by the Loyal Persons, got an Act to remove them from Corporations; they were then most employed in the Capital City in spite of their Adversaries, and God protected them, and the Plague proved

See Mr. Allen, *Sat* to Archippus p. 23. scil. *Your not preaching will occasion Separation indeed, &c.*

proved their Sanctuary from that Law. Next Year the City was burnt, and the Inhabitants of the principal Parts of it were driven into Corners; and the *Nonconformists* had the advantage! Who that knew them would not entertain them as Comforters, in a distracted ruined Condition! Then the Conformists were driven out of Churches too, and some felt the loss of Livings, to teach them Compassion towards their ejected Brethren; and the common Enemy of them both shewed the World what he would do with us, as well as them: And I am confident, if now the *Nonconformists* could be rooted out, the Church-men shall not stand long after them; no, tho' they should, which God forbid, comply with them. Popish Mercy is like raging Fire, takes all before it, and even turning shall not save us; and they who are so officious to serve their Interest now, may not come off so well with their Reward as *Adonibezek* did. Many suffered great Losses, lived in great danger and distraction by that Corporation-Act; but the Enactors could never accomplish their full design by it; the very Souldiers that were imployed to keep out People, and to guard the Meeting-places, were not pleased with their Office, and shewed Civility to the Ministers in some places. Their Sufferings went against the common sense of Men; but so captious were some Men, so zealous, rather so jealous, to justify their Resolutions, that strange Stories were carried, and dispersed of seditious Doctrines, Preachers were presented as Incendiaries, to incense the Magistrate against them; that it was dangerous for the Preachers to quote some Texts of Scriptures; and just cause there is why such unchristian Spirits should be afraid of Scriptures.

7. After all this Distraction and Trouble, His Majesty sent out his Declaration of Indulgence, and they became licensed Preachers. It is true, the Parliament at their next meeting declared against it, as contrary to the Laws, and his Majesty called it in; but it proved, and proves profitable to the *Nonconformists* several ways.

1. The very Parliament that was against the Declaration, continued rather favourable towards the *Nonconformists* than sharp; the Laws continued, but the Execution cooled and abated.

2. Such as built Tabernacles and the most convenient Places they could, held them, and their Congregations stuck to them, and both without Molestation, until now, that their *old Friend* awakes as one out of sleep, lest they should sow good Seed in the Field.

3. Though that Declaration of Indulgence, and the Licences granted them, cannot protect them from the Arrests of Mens Passions, nor from the violent Hands of such (as are like *Saul's*) against them; yet they do clearly vindicate them from the odious

Nor could at that time, as is to be seen in what follows of the Sufferings of the *Nonconformists*.

Slander of seditious and evil Men. For can it be thought that the King would have so little regard to Truth, Faith, Peace, to his own Safety, and the Preservation of his Subjects from the infection of wicked and cursed Principles, as to grant Licences to seditious Preachers, to Doctors of Rebellion, or Underminers of Church and State? they are most the same Men, who were licensed by the King; if the King was deceived in them; if they are dangerous and evil Men, testify against them, and no greater Favour is desired for them, but Truth and Justice. Let them that clamor against them and asperse them, do it, and preserve their Honour and Reverence of the King immaculate if they can.

Christianum esse (Nonconformistam esse) aut est Crimen, aut non est; si Crimen est, cur non interficis contentem? si Crimen non est, quid persequeris innocentem? Cyp. contra Demetrianum. Tract. 1.

And so much for that, by way of Apology; now follows the second Query.

2. Whether it be not hard to silence, suppress, and punish the Orthodox *Nonconformists*, for endeavouring the everlasting Salvation of precious Souls by their Preaching and other Religious Exercises?

I cannot call to mind more than three things that can be urged against them, or to justify their Sufferings.

1. They transgress the Laws and Orders of the Church, made by the Bishops, Rulers, and Fathers of the Church.

2. They transgress against the Statutes of the Land, and why should they be privileged or spared if they transgress?

3. They are Men uncalled to preach the Gospel; and it is fit such Men should be restrained.

To the first, It may be answered, waving the Disputes about Church-Rulers, and the Restriction of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; that the present Terms of Ministerial Liberty were not the Result and Decrees of all the Bishops of the Church after Consultation and free debate, supposing all the Power to be lodged in them; but we know that our Ecclesiastical Laws are made by our Convocation, and enacted and established by the Civil Power; whether there was any Debate or Disputation about these Impositions, is not altogether unknown. We read that in the Council at *Jerusalem*, met to consider a Case, as plain and easy as any of our Matters can be supposed to be, that they came not to a Determination, till after much disputing, there was nothing but open dealing. The Apostle of the Circumcision did not protest against the Apostle of the Uncircumcision, as unfit to be there, no tart

Repre-

Reprehensions or Magisterial Checks were given, but what concerned the whole Church, was debated by the whole Church, the Apostles and Elders, and the Church, *Acts 15. 6, 7, 22.* and nothing resolved; but after Consideration and Disputation, they give the Churches of *Antioch* an account of their Consultation, and lay upon them none but necessary things, without either Penalty or Sanction, but this, *from which, if you keep your selves ye shall do well.* I cannot think that the Reverend *Ver. 29.* Mr. Baxter doth reflect upon all, or most of the Bishops, by his frequent mention of *Ithacius* and *Idacius*, but well knows our Impositions to be *the Will and Pleasure* of but a small number of them; and if it be so, we may question the Right which a few Bishops had to make Laws for the whole Church, till we see their Patent.

2. But they transgress other Temporal Laws made by lawful Authority. 1. A lawful Authority is made up of several Estates in this Kingdom; whereof one is chosen by the free Votes of the People of such a rank, as have an Interest in the Land. I have heard some doubt, whether that House of Commons were so truly, their Representatives, because many of them were obtruded upon the People, and many indirect and unlawful ways were taken to sort them together. But 2. waving that, succeeding Parliaments have marked out these Laws to give them an Expiration; and were it not for Fomentations, and high Drops used by some, to keep them in Life and Vigor, they had been buried in neglect by this time. 3. But granting they are in as full force as ever; yet Laws are compared to the Grape, which being too much pressed, yieldeth an hard and *unwholsome* Wine; as the wise Lord Chancellor || *Bacon* said. To press out such a Wine, and force an exhausted party to pay dearly for it, is not the way to nourish good Blood in such a diseased Body as ours is. But having spoken of this in the *Second Plea*, I shall add no more here, but reserve something for a Postscript, concerning what I said in that.

|| *Wise and moderate
Discourse concerning
Church-Affairs, p. 37.*

3. The last Prejudice against them is, that they are Men uncalled to preach.

Answer; All of the Seniors of them had Episcopal Ordination; others have another kind, and most, if not all I plead for, have the internal, and I dare say, would cheerfully answer all the Interrogatories in the Examination, in the ordering of Priests, except a part of the last. But my Answer is, that when the calling of Ministers hath been doubted of, or questioned, as the calling of our Bishops and Ministry hath been by the Papists, Our most Reverend Fathers have insisted upon one certain Rule of Trial of true Ministers and Pastors. Hear what

our famous and blessed Bishop *Jewel* preached. * By
Sermon on 1 Cor. 4. ' this therefore, my Brethren, shall you soon try,
1, 2. fol. 223. ' whether they are the true Servants of God; for if
' they shall only disclose unto you the Will of God,
' if they shall preach unto you the Secrets of God's Gospel, and the Glo-
' ry of his holy Name, then are they true Servants, then are they
' Christ's Ministers, and faithful Dispensers of God's Secrets, &c. In
' these our days the Ministers of God, and Preachers of his Gospel,
' are evil spoken of among all Men; some say, they are unlearned, they
' are Crafts-men — Some say they preach they cannot tell what; they
' speak against Prayer, Fasting, Alms-deeds, and all other good Works —
' Unto all this I say, it is sufficient for us to be found the Servants of God,
' and faithful Dispensers of God's Secrets. When *Paul* came from *Berea* to
' *Thessalonica*, and began to preach the Gospel there, the People ran to their
' Books, searched the Scriptures, and when they found in all Points they
' agreed therewith, then they believed *Paul* — . Even so let us do, good
' Brethren — ; let us examine and try their Doctrine with the Touch-
' stone of God's Word, and confer their Teaching, their Discipline with
' the Scriptures of the Holy Ghost — , and then be you Judges; then
' if you see that we teach you nothing but the
' Mysteries of God; that we disclose to you the
' Will of God; if you see we preach unto you,
' no other thing than the Secrets of God's Gospel,
' esteem us to be the Servants of God, the Ministers
' of Christ, &c.

Folio 125, 126. So
Dr. Bensfield, de Sa-
cerdotio. Evangelico,
S. 43. bifider Bilson, Cr.
above quoted.

There are some other popular Prejudices instilled into many, and dispersed to no other effect, but to foment ill Nature, Passion, and a Spirit of Faction: such is that of a late Writer, who writes, *They set up Schismatical Conventicles, and preach People into Scruples and Factions.* How knows he that? by his own hearing, or by hear-say? How many hath he cured, that resorted unto him for Satisfaction? It is no wonder that People are abused into a Suspicion, that their Nonconformity is but a Pretence, a conscientious Disguise to cover Rebellious Principles; that they began the War, which was as impossible, as it is historically untrue: That they preach in Barns, and other places, out of dislike of Churches. I suppose, if they were offered Churches, they would not refuse them: But as Conventicles are counted as places of Disgrace, so it's an Unhappiness they have no better, and a greater, that they may not have them. His Gospel who was laid in a Manger, may be preached in a Barn, if there be no room for his Preachers in better places. The Primitive Christians were glad of any places. The Waldenses preached

preached in Barns, who were glorious Confessors of the Christian Verity. And to avoid both Danger and Offence, some of our *Nonconformists* have preached in Caves and Pits; to whose Honour or Dishonour be it spoken.

These Prejudices cast out of the way, it were easy to out-match these Prejudices; but I will not use a hand to record what is not to be heard without Trouble; but it is not unfit to take notice of so much as belongs to the Question in hand; and no more than will serve to prepare Mens Minds to believe there are Complaints, which should affect and move the Hearts of our Rulers, to hearken to the Motions of the Reconcilers, and Peace-makers. And that I may handle a tender Point, with as much Tenderness and Modesty even towards them, that make the Hearts of Christians groan and mourn, I'll proceed by Questions.

1. What had the Parishes and Congregations of *England* done to provoke the few, but potent Managers of our Ecclesiastical Affairs, to deprive them of some of the most painful, vigilant, successful, exemplary Pastors, that ever any Church enjoyed? The most learned Lord Chancellor *Bacon* said (of the Bishops) 'As for their easy silencing of them in such great scarcity of *Wise and moderate* Preachers, it is to punish the People, and not them. *Discourse*, p. 35. It must be confessed, we all had sinned; but most notoriously two sorts of People; first, those that could not endure sound Doctrine; nor Reproofs, and hate to be reformed; and others, who knew not the time of the Visitation, were too sleepy and luke-warm, and could too easily part with those who laboured to win them, and bring them to God by Repentance, Faith and Love. Could they put in better in their rooms? Was there too many, and could hundreds be spared? then why had some one Man many Livings? Was it because there were too many? or why might not many that seldom or never well could preach, be rather maintained, and eased? Was this to do as our Saviour commanded, *Pray ye to the Lord of the Harvest to send Labourers into his Harvest*? See Bishop *Jewel's* Sermon on that Text.

2. What had the Preachers done to merit silencing? I could fill up my Page with Queries; but I will keep close to the general Point. If they will not subscribe, declare, and swear such prescribed Forms; they are judged by the Law to be mute. The best is, they dissented from the Law; without Impeachment of their Loyalty to the King, for they would gladly have submitted to his Terms, and could not obey the Law, without any great Dishonour to the Legislative Power, for they only dissent from a few Men, who then could sway enow to do their Work.

They must not only do, but they must subscribe. Is that true of the same wise Lord Bacon? 'Their urging Subscriptions to their own Articles, is but *lascere & irritare morbos Ecclesie*; which otherwise would spend and crush themselves — . And it is true, there are some which (as I am perswaded) will not easily offend by Inconformity, who notwithstanding make some Conscience to subscribe: Page 35. 'For they know this note of Inconstancy, and Defection from what they have long held, shall disable that Good which otherwise they would do.

'When they have done this, they must assent and consent, &c. *Non consensum querit, sed dissidium auget, qui quod factis prestatum, verbis exigit*: He seeketh not Union, but Division, which exacteth inwardly, that which Men are content to yield in outward Action, the same great Man still.

If some of the things themselves be small, yet it is not a small thing that is required of us about them, namely, a Declaration and Subscription, our unfeigned Assent, &c. — yea, our quiet Submission to the use of them, as tolerable; sufficeth not (as we apprehend); &c. faith the wise and holy Mr. Cowber. I know all is sheltered under, and fathered upon the Law; but who invented, who formed these things? Had they the Catholick Spirit, Wisdom, Charity, Authority of the whole Church in them, to which all must yield Assent, and to whom all must consent, under peril? they could not but know there were and would be Dissents, and Dissatisfactions; they could not but know these Injunctions could not be so pleasing to the generality of the Kingdom and Church, who had received the King's Declaration with such Applause and Gratulation. And here may the fifteenth Query of the learned and judicious Sir Thomas Overbury come in: 'Whether to require Conformity in Practice, where there is difference in Judgment, be not to command a Man to act against Light and Conscience, and consequently to sin? and Query XXI, &c. *They are not Masters of their own Passions, and can not change their Thoughts as they please. He that believes any thing concerning Religion, cannot turn as the Prince commands him, or accommodate himself to the Law, or his present Interest, except he turn Atheist, &c.* Reverend Dr. Turner's Preface before the History of the Rights of Prince; pag. 49.

3. Whether it doth not imply, that if a Man assent to all Articles of Faith, to the Doctrine of the Apostles concerning the Authority of the Magistrate, concerning Decency and Order, and things indifferent, and be otherwise fitted for preaching the Gospel, and Administration of all Ordinances; yet except he do assent and consent to all things required by

by some modern Bishops, and Clergy-men, it shall avail him nothing, he shall be incapable to officiate : and whether these modern Churchmen do not set up themselves above, and exercise an Authority to dictate, most absolute, and higher than the Apostles did, who were next to Christ himself?

4. Suppose a Man be a lawfully ordained Minister, i. e. by Bishops, as many of the *Nonconformists* are ; or able, and fit in respect of soundness of Faith, Utterance, Aptness to teach ; and be scrupulous of the Truth of some Proposition which is no Article of Faith, or of some Ceremony, and Modes of Practice ; is it not hard that for some Weakness of Understanding, he cannot assent to what is formed by others not infallible, that he should be incapable of the Exercise of the Ministry, and the Church deprived of his other Abilities, for that Mistake, Weakness, or call it Error? Our Saviour bore with his Disciples, when he reprov'd them ; *Are ye yet without Understanding?* and did not turn them out.

5. Whether Assent and Consent, to some human Laws, Rites and Ceremonies, upon which neither Faith, nor Unity depends, be not hereby made more necessary for Exercise and Practice, than the assenting to Articles of Faith, or than preaching the Gospel, or by consequence, the Salvation of Immortal Souls? It is true, there is a vast difference in the nature of the things ; but as to Capacity and Incapacity to minister in the holy Office, it is all one, for a Man to refuse Assent and Consent to every thing, as it is to an Article of the Creed.

6. Or that Conformity to Order, and the use of the Liturgy, a monthly Sermon, or a Homily, is more for the Edification of the Church, than diligent and constant preaching, without a particular Assent to all, every thing? Which (I will freely speak it) can be affirmed by none, but a Man that sets light by his own Salvation, and never personally conversed with his own Flock, or knows the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace, or Eternal Life, or the Practice of the Primitive Church.

Hitherto I have laboured to open the nature of the Cause of these Proceedings against our Protestant Brethren, and it is their Nonconformity, passive and active ; the first of which is a refusal of the modern Terms of Church-Freedom ; the second is a worshipping of God in Christ, according to the Rule of the Holy Scripture, as nearly as they can discern it ; and after the common, either allowed, or not disallowed manner of the Reformed Protestant Churches, and particular this of England : And in what they do, they follow the same Rule, and act from the same Principles, which our first Reformers professed, and their learned Defenders have maintained : And three Questions shall take up the whole of what's to follow.

1. Whether

1. Whether they, the Protestant *Nonconformists*, justly deserve to be silenced, suppressed, and punished, as they have been, and are?
2. Whether they are not at least to be permitted, and indulged?
3. Whether we ought not to unite and become one, by removal, or abating the things, that divide and break us? so that we may hold mutual, and actual Communion in the same Exercises of Religion, without fear of offending our Superiours thereby, or any other?

So much hath not been spoken of the first Question in the *Second Plea*, but that much more may be produced, to encline, if not draw the sensible Reader to the right side of the Question.

1. It is clear that they are not deposed and prosecuted for such Crimes as were meritorious of Deposition in the Ancient Church by their Canons; those Crimes were Fornication, Perjury, Theft. 'Let a Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon, convicted of Fornication, Perjury, or Theft, be deposed, but with caution that he be not separated, i. e. from the Communion of the Faithful, as *Balsamon* expounds, & *non segregetur*; adding a Reason for this Moderation, that no Man be punished twice for the same Fault, as saith the Scripture, *Nab. 1. 9.* as the learned Mr. *Beveridge*, in his Notes upon those Canons, hath observed. Is it likely these should be Canons of the Apostles, contrary to *1. Cor. 5. 11*? Or if they be genuine and ancient, how disagreeing is the modern Usage of the *Nonconformists*, who are convicted of no such Crimes, according to the ancient Canons, but yet who are for their Nonconformity punished in several Courts, and several times, and ways? Deposition is judged Punishment sufficient, saith *Zonaras*; so *Aristenus*, for to subject to a double punishment, *omnino inhumanum est*, is altogether inhuman. Other Canons command a Bishop, Presbyter or Deacon to be deposed, that beat offending Believers, or Infidels, that have done wrong. *Can. 27.* If a Bishop, Presbyter or Deacon obtain his Dignity with Money, let him be deposed, and he that ordained him; *Can. 29.* If a Bishop have made use of Secular Princes to obtain a Church, let him be deposed, and excommunicated. If a Presbyter, condemning his own Bishop, shall separate from him, and set up an Altar without Cause, or blameless, either in respect of Religion, or Justice, let him be deposed; *Can. 31.* But this is not the Case of our *Nonconformists*. *Duarenus* reckons the deposing and ejecting Crimes to be, 1. Simoniack Ambition. 2. Incontinency. 3. Perjury. 4. Manslaughter. 5. Treason. 6. Or besides these Crimes, any legal Infamy. But *Panormitan* admonisheth, that they were not to observe the Severity of the ancient Canons, because the Men of this Age, are not like those ancient Men, or Men of ancient Times. *Duaren. de sacris Eccles. Ministris,*

Membris, Sec. l. 8. c. 6. There are other Causes, which touch not our Brethren, but other Men much nearer.

2. In what they do, they proceed upon Principles common to all Christians, and Protestant Churches, in taking the Word of God for their Rule, as a divine and perfect Rule. The Christian Faith, as they (of the Church of Rome) had explained it, was a *Submission to the Church*. The Reforming, finding that this was the Spring of all their Errors, and that which gave them Colour and Authority, did on the other hand, set up the Strength of their whole Cause on an explicit believing the Truth of Scriptures, because of the Authority of God, who had revealed them, saith the Reverend Dr. Burnet —. It were easy to be copious on this Argument; They who began the Reformation, laboured in translating, and publishing the Scriptures; and would have all their Doctrines tried by them. The Reverend *Bilson* bids the Papists, Prove your Religion and Service (which you stoutly and falsely term Catholick) to be commanded by Christ, or else Women and Children, be they never so silly, will collect by the manifest Words of our Saviour, that their Promise in Baptism, doth straitly bind them from believing your Errors, and admitting your Masses, until you shew good and effectual Warrant out of the Word of God, that you do what Christ did, and teach what he taught, *without adding or altering any jot*. For this is the Duty that Baptism requireth of us, to believe no Teacher but one, which is Christ, to follow no Stranger, to regard and obey no Lord or Law-maker in the Church, but only the Son, whom the Father appointed to be Master and Leader, and Ruler of the Gentiles.

Subject. part 1. forcing to Religion, p. 16.

This being a Principle common to all the Protestant Reformers, they who hold it and no other repugnant to it, or inconsistent with it; every true Protestant must needs hold they ought not to be punished for walking after it. And suppose any particular Man, or Denomination of Men err in their Superstructures, and Consequences; yet whether that Error be not a tolerable Error, and not a punishable Crime, which is consistent with Piety and Charity, may be left to the Judgment of every charitable Christian.

Jewel's Apolog. c. 16. Divis. 1, 2. C. 17. Divis. 1, 2.

3. According to this Rule and Principle, they frame their Worship, and model their Government and Discipline, and they that keep to that, though by different Schemes, having their Flaws and Failings, they cannot err a damnable Error; and if not damnable, it is want of Charity that will judge it intolerable. And there are those General Rules

and

and Directions, which direct us as by a Patern; they direct us to our End, God's Glory, and mutual Edification; the outward manner, Decency and Order: and altho in particular Decencies and Rules of Order, there may be a Diversity, yet all agree about Order; and the greatest Disagreement is in some Points of Decency, which are but

*The Means by Christ,
the Spring and Principle,
the holy Spirit, the
Matter, Word and Sacrament,
Traditions,*
p. 844

Accidents, which are no Parts of Divine Worship, as the Reverend Bishop Abbot writes, in Defence of Mr. Perkins, and do properly and immediately respect Men. It is a hard Case to punish all Men that are not of the same Complexion, or that cannot see alike clearly, tho they walk with us in the same way, of Faith, and Holiness, and Peace. The

Church of Christ never bred *that Notion*, that Church-Unity and Communion doth consist in Accidents, no more than Humane Nature, in Complexion, Shape, Stature; or of Children in Cloaths of the same Colour, Fashion Length, &c.

4. And once again; they are punished for Nonconformity; and besides, what hath been said elsewhere, in particular; besides the Consideration of the wicked Design, Sedition, Rebellion and Schism, and the odious Pretence, take the Law in the Strictest Sense of it, *and any Exercise of Religion in other manner, than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England*, seems to be forbidden by it. It seems to be unsafe for any to punish upon this Law; and it is hard to be punished by it; it signifies something, but certainly what, is very dubious. For in the Liturgy, *i. e.* Book of Common-Prayer, there are two things only. 1. Rules, Directions, and Orders, called Rubricks. 2. The Parts of the Worship and Ceremonies, ordered, prescribed, and directed by them. It seems the meaning of the Law is, That no other Exercise of Religion shall be lawful without the Common-Prayer, both Matter and Rites, according to the Rubrick; but then, the Words of the Act agree not; because the Practice of the Church, in many Places, is different from the manner of the Liturgy, as others have proved by Instances. The Practice of all Cathedrals may not be alike, for ought I know. The Practice of the Cathedral and Parish-Churches, are not the same, as all Men know; nor of one Parish like another, while so many go beyond the Rule; the Practice of some Churches, and Colledge-Chappels, and some Chappels differ from others; some reading all Psalms and Canticles and Chapters on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*; and others reading only some Prayers and the Litany; * And yet the Law for all these places is the same. The Law is uniform, but the Practice multiform: But if

* And this is according to the manner of the Church of England in Q. Eliz. days, Vid. Anj. Act 4th An. 1559.

the

the use of the Book, both Rules and Things ordered by it, be enjoined, then it seems strange that the Words should be *after the manner of the Church of England*; for suppose any should compose a Form of Worship, begin with some apt Sentences of Scripture, then go to an Exhortation to Confession, but use another Confession; and throughout observe the Rubrick, but not the same number of Psalms, nor the same Canticles, and Lessons, or one of the three, or ancient Creeds, and other Prayers; whether this would not be, tho' not the same things, yet after the manner of the Church of *England*, as being after the same Order. But take the words as before; That no Exercise of Religion to above four and the Family shall be lawful, except they use the Common-Prayer. They may some be apt to think, that,

1. Here is a Conformity allowed by this Act, to overthrow and weaken that required by the Act of Uniformity. I query; If a Minister shall in any publick place, so he be neither Parson, Vicar, or Stipendary, read the Common-Prayer, altho he do not subscribe, nor declare Assent and Consent, whether he may not lawfully preach to as large an Assembly as will hear him? And so may not a Man that is a *Nonconformist*, in respect of Subscription and Declaration, lawfully preach, as publicly as he can? and so be a legal *Nonconforming Conformist*; as honest Mr. C. called himself; and whether this Act doth not strike at the Act of Uniformity?

2. Doth it not cast an ill look upon all other Modes of Divine Worship, as if no other Form were consistent with the Peace of the Kingdom, but what is according to the Liturgy?

3. That all that dissent from all things in the Liturgy, are Persons to be suspected of the King, except such as say, or hear the Liturgy, and for that Cause are not; and by Consequence, whether the Execution of it doth not clearly tend to divide between the King and his Subjects, and between Subject and Subject; yea, to make them that are religious appear more formidable than the irreligious?

4. And whether it is not to set up a manner of Worship composed by Men, above the *manner of Worship* appointed by God? for let the Worship as to the Matter and End and Principle be divine, it is not tolerable, except it be after that one Manner and Practice. I'll add no more Doubts and Prejudices, but come to plain Argument.

They who ought to be encouraged and protected by the King of *England*, as Supream Governour, ought not to be punished: But our Protestant *Nonconformists* ought to be encouraged and protected: Therefore, &c.

They who set up no false and Idolatrous Worship, contrary to the Word of God, that worship God according to his Word, ought to be encouraged

couraged and protected by the King of *England*, as *Supream Governour*, and his *Laws*. But such is their *Worship* (in every part;) Therefore, &c.

I'll touch the *Minor* first, and then go to the Proposition: That *Worship* which agrees in the right Object, of Scripture-matter, according to Scripture, and to divine Ends, is true *Worship*: but such is their *Worship*. Therefore, &c.

To multiply no more *Syllogisms*; I prove the Proposition by the constant Uniform, allowed *Doctrine* of the Church of *England*. And to strike home at one blow, thus I argue:

They who ought to be encouraged and protected, and not punished, according to the allowed *Doctrine* of the Church of *England*, explaining the King's *Supremacy*, ought not to be punished by any new or subsequent *Law*, that doth not condemn that allowed *Doctrine* of the Church, as this Act doth not. But according to the allowed *Doctrine* of the Church of *England*, explaining the King's *Supremacy*; they, and such as they, are to be encouraged and protected: Therefore &c.

This is the Proposition I am to prove; the *Major* being clear.

Those Reverend Fathers of the Reformed Religion, which disputed against the Pope's, and proved the King's *Supremacy*, did thus state and explain it, in the necessary *Exudition* of a *Christian Man*.

See forth by Hen. 8th.

Vid. Dr. Bur. 1 Vol.

History of the Reform.

P. 142.

To them specially and principally it pertaineth to defend the Faith of Christ, and his Religion, to conserve and maintain the true *Doctrine* of Christ, and all such as be true *Preachers* and *Secretaries* forth thereof; and to abolish *Abuses*, *Heresies*, and *Idolatries*, and to punish with Corporal Pains, such as of *Malice* be the occasion of the same; and finally to over-see, and cause that the said Bishops and Priests do execute their Pastoral Office truly and faithfully, and specially in these Points, which by Christ and his Apostles were given and committed to them; and in case they shall be negligent in any part thereof, or would not diligently execute the same, to cause them to redouble and supply their Lack; and if they obstinately withstand their Prince's kind Monition, and will not amend their Faults, then and in such Case to put others in their room and places. And God hath also commanded the said Bishops to obey with all Humbleness and Reverence, both Kings, and Princes, and Governours, and all their Laws, not being contrary to the Laws of God, whatsoever they be, and that not only *propter Iram*, but also *propter Conscientiam*. With this *Doctrine* all our best Writers of unquestionable Authority agree: See *Jewel's Apology*, Part 1. p. 15. Edit. 1570. *Apol.* c. 11. *Divis.* 3. cut down Groves, break down Images, coerce and chastise Negligence, and Falshood of the Bishop, pag. 715. *Johua* also *Apoc.* 11. *Divis.* 6, 8, 9, 10, 11. c. 15. *Divis.* 1, 3. c. 17. *Divis.* 1, 2. — The Reproof of Mr. Dorman, with

with a Defence of the chief Government of Christian Princes, by Dr. Alexander Nowel, London, 1566. p. 24. b. p. 131, 143, 161. b. Dr. Jo. Rainold's Conference with Hart, c. 10. 'We never affirmed that Princes might command what God forbiddeth, or *prohibit what God commandeth*. Bishops have their Authority to preach and administer the Sacraments from Christ himself —; only the Prince giveth them publick Liberty without let or disturbance to do what *Christ commandeth* —. Princes suffer and incite them with Peace and Praise to do their Duties —. Princes may by their Laws prescribe the Christian Faith to be preached, the right Service of God *in Spirit and in Truth to be used*, the Sacraments to be administered, *according to the Lord's Institution* —. *Bilson* of Subjection, pag. 216, 217, &c. 'We say that Princes, as publick Magistrates, may give Freedom, Protection, and Assistance to the preaching of the Word, ministering the Sacraments, and right using of the Keys, pag. 227, 236, 240, 249. See Bishop Bridges of the Supremacy against Scapleton, and Saunders, p. 672; 673: I'll quote no more of him.

There is neither Idolatry in Worship, nor Heresy in the Faith of the *Nonconformists*, for which they ought to be restrained, nor Ungodliness and Dishonesty, for which they should be punished, any more than the best of Men: But worshipping the true God in Christ by the Spirit according to his Word, &c. By the foregoing Doctrine they are to be encouraged and protected. There is but one thing to their Prejudice, their Disobedience to some Temporal Ecclesiastical Laws, requiring Subscriptions. &c. Hear a little further the Doctrine of the Bishops and Doctors. 'To devise Rites and Ceremonies for the Church is not the Prince's Vocation, but to receive and allow such as the Scriptures and Canons commend, and such as the Bishops and Pastors of the Place shall advise, not infringing the Scriptures or Canons. And for all other Ecclesiastical Things and Causes, Princes be neither the Devisers nor Directors of them, but the Confirmers and Establishers of that which is good, and Displacers and Avengers of that which is Evil —. *Bilson*, pag. 252. The Ceremonies in divers particular Churches, are of divers sorts, and that without any Inconvenience at all, so they all agree in those unchangeable Laws, given by the Universal Head, Christ. The Reverend Dr. Nowel's Reproof of *Dorman*, p. 25. See *Homil.* of Fasting, second Part. How easy may the Bishops if they pleased, take away the Causes of our decried Schism? or without any Crime of Schism, permit a Diversity, to them that are governed by the unchangeable Law of Jesus Christ? and only differ from their particular and changeable Laws.

To conclude; If the Faith of the *Nonconformists* be the Catholic Faith, (as it is in all and every Point and Article, even the same which

is professed in the Church of *England* contained in the Scriptures; if they are good Men, and honest Subjects; Then we are taught and exhorted to pray, that the King, and all in Authority under him, may have Wisdom, Strength, Justice, Clemency, and Zeal to God's Glory, to God's Verity, to Christian Souls, and the Common-wealth. Let us pray they may rightly use their Sword and Authority, for the Maintenance and Defence of the *Catholick Faith*, contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, and of their good and honest Subjects; for the Fear and Punishment of the evil and vicious People.

The 3d part of the Homily of Obedience, p 69. Lond. Edit. 1673.

Object. But they transgress the Laws, therefore are not good and honest Subjects, break the Orders of the Church, &c.

Ans. Preaching and hearing the *Catholick Faith*, is, I hope, no Transgression of the Laws: if it be, then, you do in effect say the Laws are against Godliness, and the Exercise of the *Catholick Faith*. They are good and honest Subjects, that pray for the King, pay Tribute, live in Godliness and Honesty; therefore they are to be protected and encouraged, which was the Proposition to be proved. I suppose no Law ought to be construed, or executed, which in Construction and Execution is contrary to the *Catholick Doctrine* of the Church of *England*, established by Law. The Faith they profess is *Catholick*, their Worship is according to the Scripture, and they corrupt the People neither with Sedition, or Disobedience. The Conditions of Liberty which they refuse, are no Article of *Catholick Faith* or Practice; therefore they ought not to be punished, according to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

The second Question is, Whether the *Nonconformist* Protestants are not to be indulged and permitted?

The former Discourse answers this Question. If they do not deserve to be punished, but protected and encouraged; then they ought to be permitted and indulged, while they design and act nothing inconsistent with, or contrary to the Duties of good, honest, peaceable Subjects.

2. Permission and Indulgence is the lowest degree of Favour that can be shewed to *Catholick Christians* and Protestants in a Christian Protestant Kingdom.

1. If more be due to the Profession of Christian Religion, yea, of the Protestant Religion: Then a Permission, or Indulgence, is the least Respect and Favour due to it. But more is due to it than Permission; therefore that's the least.

2. If Permission was due to Godliness and Honesty from adverse Powers, both Jewish and Heathen; and if it be due to Reformed Christians,

rians, in Popish Countries; then it is much more due to Protestant Professors in Protestant Kingdoms and States: But the former is true; therefore much more the latter.

Of these in particular:

1. The Jewish Powers ought to have permitted the preaching of the Gospel to our Saviour and his Apostles, because it was of God; and God hath Sovereign Power in all the World, to set up his Kingdom, and Laws. It was the Sin of the Jews to forbid the preaching of the Gospel; it was a Duty in the Apostles to preach it, even when forbidden. If it was a Sin in the Jews to forbid it, they ought certainly to permit it; yea, they ought to have received and obeyed it. If it had been a Duty, (and no Sin) in the Jews to forbid the preaching of Christ, it had been a Sin in the Apostles notwithstanding, and against that Prohibition, to preach it. But it was an Obedience to God (the higher Power) to preach it; therefore they who forbid it, ought to permit it, yea much more, it was their Duty to believe it.

2. The same Reason will hold all the World over; because Christian Religion is from God, and teaches the Knowledge, and Obedience, and Worship of God, and the way to Life; therefore God may send it all over the World by Men called and sent by him, without the Commission of the Powers of the World. And if Men knew the Gift of God, they ought to esteem it the greatest Mercy, and manifestation of Grace, that was ever shewed to the Sons of Men.

Our Saviour commands his Apostles to go into all the World, to preach the Gospel to every Creature. It comes among them without their Knowledge, and against their Wills: Ought it to be received or not? if not, then God ought not to be obeyed according to his revealed Will, which no Man dare affirm: if it ought to be received, it ought to be permitted and indulged with an overplus of Reverence and Honour. Godliness and Honesty was to be privileged, and protected, to be cherished, and not extinguished in Heathen Kingdoms: *1 Tim. 2. 2.* They desired to lead quiet Lives, free from Trouble and Persecution, the use they were to make, and did make of their Quietness, was the Exercise of Godliness and Honesty. To this end they were to pray for Kings, and all in Authority: And Kings, and all in Authority, may venture and not fear to give Protection and Security to all that pray for them, and that live in Godliness and Honesty under them. If protection and Quietness might be expected from Heathens, much more from Christians.

3. If Reformed Christians ought to be permitted in Popish Kingdoms and States; then Christians professing the Reformation, may be much more permitted in Protestant Kingdoms and States, and by Consequence,

quence in this Kingdom. Popish Kings and Rulers ought to receive, and obey the Truth, and to believe no more than what Christ hath commanded to be believed, and to worship God according to the Will of Christ. Shall we say the Protestants in *France* do not hold the Faith, nor worship God according to the Gospel? then what are they who say so? If they profess and believe the Truth, they ought to be permitted, that's plain, for the Truth's sake, and for the Lord's sake. Both Christian Love and Compassion prompt us, to wish our persecuted Brethren in *France* enjoyed the Liberty of the true Religion there? and if they should enjoy a Freedom there, shall we deny a Liberty to Protestant Brethren here? I can see no way to avoid a Justification of the barbarous Usage of Protestants there, by them that prosecute Protestants here, for far lesser Differences from our Establishments, than theirs from the Papists. Suppose an Embassador was sent to treat with the *French* King, at this time of Prosecution of our Native Protestants, for a Cessation of that cruel Persecution: how readily might an Answer be made, Why may not I suppress Hereticks, when in *England* you suppress Protestants?

4. A Diversity of Order and Manner of Discipline and Worship, may be as well permitted without breach of Church-Unity in the same Nation, as in divers Nations, without breach of Christian and Catholick Unity. If different Forms of Belief are allowed, the matter being divine, and the one more large and explicit than others; why may not different Modes and Order of Discipline and Worship be allowed and permitted? Our Worship is according to our Faith; as we believe, so we worship: Notwithstanding our use of three Forms of Profession of our Faith, we agree in one Faith; so in different Forms of Worship we agree in one Evangelical Worship: And our Reformers might with as great Reason have pitched upon one of the three Creeds, and for Uniformity sake, required Assent to that, and the use of that and no other, as our Modern Fathers pitch upon one Form of Worship, and require our Assent and Use of that, and no other. For Uniformity in Faith is more necessary than Uniformity in Orders and Rites. We use the Creed called the Apostles, *Athanasian*, and *Nicen* Creed. Bishop *Jewel* hath written a larger Form, in his Apology for the Church of *England*, agreeing in Words with neither; and, in his Reply to *Harding*, reckons up eight Forms, composed by several Authors and

Apol. 2d part, 1. c.
Divis. 1. Diversity of
Creeds, fol. 38.

Fathers. *Harding*, cavilling against his Declaration of our Faith, (as many in our days exclaim against Dissenters,) said, *In our Fathers days, Christian People lived in perfect Unity, &c. before Luther's New Gospel* —. But let us learn from our Reverend Father *Jewel*, that Unity of Faith may agree

agree with Diversity of Forms of Faith; and by Consequence, with Diversity of Forms of Worship.

Objec. But the Administration of God's Worship ought to be uniform in one Nation; and variety of Rites in one National Church, would Cause Division of Judgment, and by Consequence Division of Affection; and to tolerate divers ways of Administrations, would be to tolerate matter of perpetual Discord and Schism.

Ans. Besides what the learned and acute Sir Thomas Overbury answers to a part of the matter of this Objection, pag. 106. and the Commissioners in the *Savoy*; I'll *Account of Proceedings*, p. 8, 9, 10 return my Answer in two things. 1. Without Controversy, our Lord Jesus took care for the Preservation of Unity, such a Unity as is necessary among his Disciples; and yet took no such Course as these Men build all Unity upon. 2. The Church of *Corinth* was doubtless a particular Church, and according to the Sense of the Reverend Bishop *Bilson*, quoted before, there was no Form of Liturgy prescribed, p. 619, 620.

To be short, Multitudes of learned and able Men, living in one Kingdom, have diversity of Apprehensions and Notions of things, as well as in divers Nations; and except Uniformity of Words might produce an inward Uniformity of Conceptions, it hath not that Influence upon Unity as some Men think, by their too violent urging of it.

3. I am for Uniformity according to General Rules, not excluding Prudence, which must judg what's necessary, what's expedient, what's edifying, or what not: for to exclude Prudence, is to limit Divine Providence to particular Rules. Divine Providence proceeds from Sovereignty; Prudence observes it, and Conscience must obey it: Saving the Dominion of Providence, and the Exercise of Ministerial Prudence, let's be as uniform as we can. This prudential Latitude is allowed to every Curate, in the choice of Homilies, in dividing them, leaving a part for the After-noon, and changing of Lessons, reading one for another, as shall be most for Edification, in the Admonition to all Ecclesiastical Ministers before the second part of the Homily.

To conclude this Question, I desire the violent and active, and the violent and oppressive Disputants of these times, to answer, Whether they think that our Protestant-Dissenting-Brethren, that preach the Faith, and labour to convert and build up precious Souls, are unworthy to enjoy Liberty to preach the Gospel, or to enjoy their Estates, or to live in any part of the World? If not, what ground have they for their ill Opinion? What Christian Charity have they? How do they conspire with Bloody Inquisitors, and French Persecutors! yea Irish Rebels, and Inhuman Rooters out of Heresy! But if not worthy to live among
us,

us retaining their Liberty of Conscience and Religion, Whither shall they go? Where are they like to find more natural Affection, than among their Native Country-men and Acquaintance? Where shall they be more wel-come? among the Papists? among Infidels, where Satan bears so much Rule? or among Protestants abroad? Alas, where! who can entertain them? Would you banish them to Scotland, Ireland? there are too many already? Whither would you have them go (for they are bid begon, if they'll not conform, by some) where they may do good? there's work enough for them, where-ever they are? Why may they not do good here among us? To be short, they who turn them out of their Hearts, and Charity, upon the same reason banish them out of the Land, if not out of the World: And what if they should say as their Ejectors do, We had better live or be in any Land or Nation, even among the Papists or Infidels, than live among such as these: Would it not sound worse than all that yet they have said? And what a Division, or Schism at the very root, would that be, if it grew to it? Which it hath not done, and I wish never may. But we may see that Violence is a Wedge to make the most ghastly Schism that ever was seen in a Christian Church.

But rather than be guilty of so unpeaceable and uncharitable a Thought or Carriage, capable of such a Construction, which all Christians should as ill endure to lodge within them as the Devil himself, or expose our Brethren to Temptations and Sufferings; let us all most earnestly pray for Peace and Union, and lay aside all Thoughts and Passions, which are the beginnings of Schism. And so I come to the last Query.

Query 3. Whether we ought not to unite as above said, and so to unite, and become one, by the removal or abating the things which divide and break us, so that we may hold mutual and actual Communion in the same Exercise of Religion, without fear of offending our Superiours or any other?

That we ought to unite, is the Cry and Voice of all, in whom Christianity doth but faintly breath, and the Spirit of God hath any effect or Interest; but the *Quomodo* is most difficult, in this, as in many other Operations. I have betrayed my self, and discovered my poor Opinion in the very Question, by removing and abating the things which divide and break us. But it appears clear to my Apprehension, that no other way or means will ever do. If the Dissenters should be miraculously convinced, or charmed into a Consent; then that which was a Cause of dissent, is become as no Cause: and while their Understandings stand at this distance, and they be but sincere and obedient, and honest to their own Thoughts and Judgments, they can never come over to us; and to use force without Reason, is the way to drive them from God, when we pretend to drive them to Church. Would we have them act against the settled

settled, Dictates of their Conscience? and is Force the way to convince the Conscience? And really what hath been offered to inform their Understandings, hath been ineffectual to that End. Is it likely such Writings that convey neither Love nor distinctive Reasonings, will ever persuade Men, better studied in their own Case, than they that unite against them? Is it likely that a display of Words, and sounding the Trumpets, not to call the Congregation together, to unite in Love and Peace, but to alarm People, to arm themselves, and to watch as against Seditious Persons, will ever encourage them to come in and unite with us? We must argue from better Topicks, than Sarcasms, Flouts, Mockery, Emulation, Wrath and Reviling; these Deeds of the Flesh will never allure Men to walk with us in one Spirit.

There are large Encomiums of Unity and Peace, and every part of the Encomium, or praise of it, contains an Argument to persuade us to it. And two mighty Arguments should at this time prevail with us, * Necessity, and Self-preservation; we see our apparent Dangers by being scattered abroad, like an Army in a Rout, or Disorder, or Tumult, while our Potent Enemies are united against us. We cry out upon Dissenters as factious, but were it not for a Factious Spirit

among our selves, they had never been thus broken and separated from us. Our Life, our Delights, our Happiness, doth consist in, or spring from Union; after this, our Desires do run or fly, they move at no slower rate: Our Death, Sorrows, Grievs, and Unhappiness doth follow our Separation from the things, wherein Life, Delight and Happiness consist. A divided State is an unhappy State; Charity is the Bond of Perfectness; when Charity dies, then the Church is like a Princely Family broke up, dispersed and divided. They who do not love, cannot unite, but make a Breach, and Separation. The uncharitable Man is the factious Man. To impute Factionness to one Party, who would unite, but cannot, and to excuse another who may unite, but will not, is to judge with too apparent a Partiality for an equal Judge. Had the upper side, but the very same Reasons and Arguments, which now the oppressed use and urge for themselves, they would be of Authority, and very considerable, if not unanswerable; whereas now they are look'd upon as weak, and scorned as ridiculous. Favour and Authority gives Force and Weight to the Reasons of them that enjoy the benefit of the Favour; and when Persons are exposed to Contempt, their strongest arguments are despised as weak, and their loudest Complaints are not heard, but rebuked as causeless, and themselves branded as a Faction, tho they are Catholick and Loyal in their Faith and Principles. And this is plain, the Noncon-

formists have found it so; their Arguings, Representations, Complaints (which have been but few) Motions, Supplications, Apologies have been despised; because they are despised and low in the World, and a worldly Interest keeps them down. I have sometimes thought, that if Authority had been against the use of the Cross, and commanded Mr. Parker to write his Book against it, then he had been dignified with the Epithets, that Mr. Hooker hath been adorned with, of the Judicious Parker, and the Profound Parker, and the Excellent Parker, whereas being on the decried side, he hath been often laughed at. The greatest number of Men consider more the Condition of the Person, than the thing spoken or written by him; and give him the greatest Honour, by whom they may receive a Favour. From this Partiality a Faction grows up and thrives exceedingly, when it is fatned by the Richness of the Soil, and influenced from some that sit above; and hence it comes, even from Partiality and Faction, that the imputation of Faction is constantly thrown upon Dissenters, because they do not what they cannot do with a good Conscience according to their Light. But if all of us would set up God's Glory, the Edification of his Church, Truth, Peace, and Union in the middle as a Center, and all of us that are scattered and divided in the Circumference, run up to it, by the Lines of Scrip-

*Id. Cypr. de simplici-
tate Clericorum,
Unitas servatur in
figine.* than he is, the Church more edified, and we more happy in Peace and Union than we are; or if we were all affected to glorify God, to edify the Church, and to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, as long as we agreed, and met in God as in a Center, and the Lines of Holy Scripture, tho' we did not all run in on Line, in one Way, but different Ways. Our Diversity would be without Schism, and all our Divisions would be like the dispersing of a numerous Family without Alienation of Affection; like the Distribution of the Patriarchs into their several Tribes, inhabiting the Land of Canaan, all of the same Blood, the same Religion, in the same Covenant with God.

Towards this Union, we must consider;

- I. Wherein it consists.
- II. Remove the Causes of Division as much as possibly we can. The Causes of Division are, 1. Inward, 2. Outward, and apply our selves to the Means of Union.
- III. Wherein the nature of Schism doth properly consist.

II. The Persons united, are Christ and his Church, under the Denomination of his Members, his Body, and his Spouse, compared to several kinds of Union, as natural and political. Every Christian is united to Christ by the Spirit of Christ's working Faith, and Faith perceiving, or seeing Christ to be what he is; and what he is, made of God to us, doth attract Love to him, which is intire, sincere, fervent. By Faith and Love the renewed gracious Soul doth confederate with, and consent, and submit to Jesus Christ, according to the Articles of the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace. Every Member of Christ is a part of the whole, and there is the same Spirit in all, they are all Members of Christ, and Members one of another, and that Spirit, Faith and Love, which unites to Christ, doth unite them one to another: This Union is from active operating Principles and Graces, which are quickened, and strengthened by the Spirit of Christ, making use commonly of outward Means and Ordinances to that End: And these Graces, or the New Man, so quickened and assisted, exercise that Power towards Christ and one another; and this mutual Exercise of Grace, is our Communion with Christ, and his with us, and of one towards another, according to our various Conditions, in mutual Care, Sympathy, Compassion, and Joy. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26.

This Communion with Christ, and one another, in this Life, is but imperfect, we understand but in part, and our Faith serves and helps us but in an imperfect State, and by Consequence our Love is weak, and other Graces are at best but in a growing Condition. Our Administrations, and Communion in Ordinances have great Imperfections, according to the weakness of our Perceptions, Light and Judgment, and other Graces. And suppose our Love were strong and intire to one another, yet in this bad Light, we are subject to many great Errors and Mistakes: And our Union and Agreement lies, 1. In one general End, God's Glory. 2. In one Common Principle of Operation, or Efficient Cause, the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 3. In one way and means of Conveyance and Acceptation, Jesus Christ, as our Mediator and Advocate. 4. In one General Rule, the Holy Scriptures, and the Institutions of Jesus Christ the Law-giver; where there are these Ones, there is Catholick Unity: *There is one Body, and one Spirit; even as ye are called in one hope of your Calling; One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; One God and Father of all, which is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Ephes. 4. 4, 5, 6, &c. The ancient true Bonds of Unity, are one Faith, one Baptism, and not one Ceremony, one Polity, saith the Lord Bacon; our Disagreement is in the *Ubi supra.* p. 4. latter, we agree in the first and principal.

From this Union proceeds Communion; for, the Church, the Body of Christ, consisting of living Members, quickened by the renewing, sanctifying Spirit, and exercising the Graces received, have Communion with God through and by the Spirit; and with one another, as Children of the same Heavenly Father, and Subjects of the same Heavenly King, and Members of the same Family. And this Communion is held, maintained, exercised, and increased by Laws and Ordinances, in the Observation of which, there is a conveyance of many and great Privileges and Benefits.

This Union and Communion, is either inward or outward; inward, in being joined to the Lord, and to one another, in being of one Mind and Heart: Outward, and that's twofold: 1. In spiritual things. 2. In outward and carnal things.

1. In spiritual things; So, the first Church, continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread and Prayers; Acts 2. 42. And they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking of Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness and Singleness of Heart, praising God, &c. Vers. 46, 47. And let us consider one another to provoke unto Love and to good Works, not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: Heb. 10. 24, 25. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly, in all Wisdom, admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, &c. Col. 3. 16. Exhorting one another; Heb. 3. 13. Comforting one another; 1 Thess. 4. 18. Edifying one another; Chap. 5. 11. Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit; Ephes. 6. 18. Confessing their Faults one to another, and praying one for another, &c. James 5. 16.

2. In outward and carnal things; Acts 2. 44, 45. C. 4. 32, 34, 35. C. 5. 4. Heb. 13. 16. 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, &c. This kind of Communion is beside the Subject now in hand.

It is said, there can be no Union without Communion: be it so. Is not that Communion both of Churches, Pastors and Persons, a sufficient Communion to free any Churches or Persons from the Guilt of Schism, which is answerable and proportionable to the Union of the Body of Christ, and agreeable to the Institutions and Ordinances of Christ? His Ordinances are sufficient Means and Instances of Communion, without any Additions of Forms and Ceremonies; we have his Law, and Form of Admission into his Family and Church, Baptism: And being baptized by one Spirit into one Body; we have his Word, which is sufficient to make us wise unto Salvation, and to make the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good Work; we have a Form and Pattern of Prayer, and Directions and Matter for all manner of Prayer; we have a Sacrament for Communion and Confirmation;

we have what Christ thought sufficient Means of Communion in all and every Nation that should receive the Gospel; and by Consequence for the universal, and every particular Church. And it is observed, what the Spirit of Christ did to preserve Unity, and prevent Schism. He gave diversities of Gifts, for divers Administrations and Operations: The Church is compared to a Body, consisting of different Members, in Subordination, for Service and Usefulness; some to do the Office of an Eye, others of an Ear; some of a Hand, others of a Foot; some honourable, and some dishonourable, that there should be no Schism in the Body, *1 Cor. 12.* He inspired holy Men, and they spake as inspired by him, but not the same form of Words, without a great variety, not the same Form of Prayer in the same Words and Syllables; no not the same Form of Words to a word in the Institution of the Lord's Supper; *St. Mark* leaves out, *Drink ye all of it*; *Mark 14. 23.* and for Remission of Sins, ver. 24. *St. Luke* adds to, *This is my Body, given for you, Do this in Remembrance of me*; *Chap. 22. 19, & 20.* to the Cup, which is shed for you; and not as the other two Evangelists. And *St. Paul* delivers to the *Corinthians*, what he received from the Lord, and adds to *St. Matth.* and *Mark*, and varies from *St. Luke*, *This is my Body which is broken for you*, and keeps the words of *St. Luke*, *In Remembrance of me*; but adding, *As oft as ye do it in Remembrance of me*, after the Cup; *1 Cor. 11. 23, 24.* — If either of these Holy Apostles gave the Sacrament, using his own Words, and so it be delivered in four Forms; who will doubt but he holds Communion sufficient to the Ends of the holy Sacrament? And the Uniformity lies in Blessing and giving Thanks, in taking Bread, breaking it, giving and taking it, as a Token of the Body of Christ to the appointed End; and so also the Cup, as a Token of his Blood, drinking it to the appointed End. Uniformity of Words is not necessary to Church-Communion, neither in Articles of Faith, nor in Preaching, nor in Prayer, nor in Sacraments; and yet Church-Communion is as necessary a Duty, as associating of Churches and Assemblies, it being truly the End of such Association and Assembling. And yet no Man of sense will deny the great Advantages of Consent, Agreement, Similitude, and Uniformity in all our Administrations, as near as we can frame our Minds thereunto, which will never come nearer than according to general Rules, without Debates and Disputes, as many, if not more, and of as great an Influence upon Peace, as can arise from the Application and Construction of General Rules.

II. Let us remove and take away the Causes of Disunion and Division as much as possibly we can.

And

And first, Those that are within us, which may be reduced to *Flesh and Self*. For whereas there is among you *Envy, Strife and Divisions*, are ye not carnal and walk as Men? For while one saith, *I am of Paul*, and another, *I am of Apollo*, are ye not carnal? 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4. Self is the Schismatick within us, till we are converted from it, we are separate from Christ, and by Consequence are disunited from his Body, and do not consent to the Terms of his Covenant and Salvation, Self-conceit, Pride, and Loftiness, Self-will, Self-seeking, and Self-love, are the Springs of our bitter Waters of Strife and Separation, that run into divers Channels, or rather break the Banks, and overflow the Church.

2. The outward Causes are besides the Co-operation of the World and Devil, the rigorous exacting and enforcing of particular Conditions of Church-Liberty and Communion, with such Forfeitures and Penalties, as hinder the Progress of the Word of Life, and the Salvation of Souls: All our Wars have been before the Gates of the City, since many have been turned out; we say they shall not come in, except they will subscribe to Terms; and they say they cannot, except they are taken away: Both Sides must sound a Parlee; and our Governours have the greatest, and most imitable prevailing Example of the King of his Church, and his Apostles. Hear our Homily.

Homily of Fastings 1st
part, p. 172, 173. Edit.
Lond. 1673.

God's Church ought not, neither may it be so tied to that, or any other Order now made, or hereafter to be made and devised by the Authority of Man, but that it may lawfully for just Causes, alter, change, or mitigate those Ecclesiastical Decrees and Orders; yea, *recede wholly from them*, and break them, when they tend either to Superstition, or to Impiety, when they draw People from God, rather than work any Edification in them (and not in these Cases alone, as you shall hear afterwards). This Authority Christ used for the Order and Decree made by the Elders for washing oft-times —, tending to Superstition, our Saviour changed into the Sacrament of Regeneration. This Authority, *To mitigate Laws and Decrees Ecclesiastical*, the Apostles practised —. Acts 15. signifying, they would not lay any other Burden upon them, but these Necessaries —. Thus ye have heard that Christian Subjects are bound to obey, even in Conscience, sincere Laws, which are not repugnant to the Laws God —. Ye have heard that Christ's Church is not so bound to observe any Order, Law, or Decree made by Man: *To prescribe a Form in Religion*; but that the Church hath full Power and Authority from God to change and alter the same, when need shall require, &c. Was there ever greater need than now? Love of Union, Peace and Growth of Godliness, Sense of imminent Danger, and that Danger no less than Destruction, hath moved the Right Reverend

rend Bishop of *Cork* to print those pressing Divine Sermons, and take his Testimony, (as carrying greater Authority than of private Men's) of the necessity of Union: speaking of the Protestants in *Ireland*, We must *unite, or be destroyed*. And how far is *Ireland* from *England*? Can the Protestant Church in *Ire-* *First Serm. p. 29.*
land be destroyed, and *England* be safe? Yea, how much further is the Destruction from *England*, than from *Ireland*? may not *England* be destroyed first? It is most likely: for if *England* be destroyed, *Ireland* cannot escape; if *Ireland* be destroyed, *England* will be endangered, but may better withstand it, than *Ireland* can. The same discerning and sensible Bishop cannot conceive any Possibility of an Union of all honest-minded Men of different Persuasions amongst us, that call themselves Protestants, but by the coming of such several Dissenters into the establish'd Church. Hence the Inference is not far to be fetched. That this Union can never be *Second Serm. p. 61.*
 but by taking away the Bars, and the Chains that keep the Dissenters from entering in: Upon what Terms (saith that Right Reverend and Excellent Person) must we of the Establish'd Church come over to you, that dissent, or you come over to us? We declare, we cannot without Schism; and then adds a most generous Expression of a large and catholicick Spirit: — But are ready to sacrifice all we can otherwise to the Publick Peace and Safety. O that all were thus frank, in their biddings for Peace and Uni- *Page. 29*
 on! But Right Reverend Father, Dissenting-Protestants and Independents, will never press you so far, as to come to them, that is, to be Presbyterians and Independents: If you will, do what you may without Schism; and they do what ever can be done with a good Conscience, the deadly Wound is in a hopeful way of cure.

Find out, first, what Unity is necessary for this imperfect State.
 2. Observe what Rules Christ gave by his Spirit, and the Holy Apostles practised for Unity, against Schism, for Truth and Faith against Heresy, for Government against Confusion, for Order against Disorder, for Decency against Indecency, for Worship against Idolatry and Irreligion, for Discipline against decay of Piety, and for the soundness of its Members; in a word, for Admission into Communion and Privileges, for Edification, Peace, and Comfort: And what more can be necessary for Unity and Peace of Christians in one Nation, than what was sufficient for Christians in all Nations? And then there will be neither Schism on one hand, nor Dissent on the other. That one Rule of the Apostle, as far as we have attained, let us walk by the same Rule, would unite and heal us, and do us more Service than all the Volumes of Canons besides.

besides. And who can walk by the same Rule further than he hath attained?

The Means to be used for Union, are 1. A sincere Observation of, and conscientious Consent unto the Terms of our Christianity and Salvation, our Baptismal Vow. Hypocrites and Formalists, are the first Rank of Dissenters, and Schismatics, that conform not unto the Laws of Christ, and Terms of Salvation. 2. A conscientious walking after the Spirit. Sensual Men, that have not the Spirit, are the notorious Separatists. 3. A studious search into, and keeping to the holy Gospel, wherein we are taught, as the way to Union.

1. A setting up, or rather acknowledgment of God, *as in all, and above all*; 1 Cor. 3.

2. An Imitation of Jesus Christ: *Phil. 2. 5.* in Humbleness of Mind and Condescension.

3. Unity of Mind in the Lord; *Phil. 4. 2.* 1 Cor. 1. 10. not contentious, striving in Parties, as if Christ were divided.

4. By Charity which suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh none Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth. By these Divine Effects and Properties of Charity, we may lay our Divisions upon the Head of Uncharitableness: Charity keeps all together as in a Bond of Perfectness: *Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly Love, in Honour preferring one another*: Rom. 12. 10. *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*, ver. 15. 1 Cor. 12. 25; 26.

5. By Self-denial. This is the individual Property and Effect of true Faith and Love, and by Consequence the necessary Qualification of a Disciple. By this we seek God's Glory; and not our own; pray that *God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done*; as if we had no Interest nor Concernment in this World, but the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom; nor Work to do; but to do his Will. Except we deny our selves we cannot condescend, not seek the good of all, but please our selves; we cannot have a Care of one another as of our selves; we shall not seek the things that be of Christ, but our own. This Factious, this Schismatical Self must be denied, or we can never be healed, nor grow in one.

6. If we would unite, we must not aggravate Divisions, nor multiply Schisms in our own Fancies, Opinions and uncharitable Affections, looking upon diversity of Opinions, as hideous Errors; upon Errors as damnable; judging others as Deceivers, and deceived, and admiring our selves, as if privileged with a little Infallibility; censuring our Brethren, reviling, reproaching, suppressing and persecuting of them.

Our

Our Union lies in a Point, it is in the Head, in the Essentials of Christianity, of Faith and Worship, and in *Amen*, as the Sum of our Prayers. An so Schism, pernicious Schism, lies in a narrower Compass, than most Men, I will not say, would have it; but than most do lay it in.

And they were censured Schismatics, who separated from the Catholick Church, by Cyprian ad magnum, &c. August. &c.

Schism is a Breach of Union; but then it is a Breach of that Union which ought to be among Christians, from the Nature and Laws of Christianity. But according to some, the weaker side is always the Schismatical.

And so I come to the last Head, to shew wherein Schism lies, or what Schism is: It hath many Branches, and Degrees; but I'll take the most authentick Notion of it, from the prime Doctors and Fathers of the Church of *England*, by which I dare say, our Protestant Dissenters will be tried and judged. Hear the Canon, and let it be the Reed to measure our Schism by; we may stand to their Rule, who made our Canons: *Anno 1603. Can. ix.* The Title is, *Authors of Schisms in the Church of England censured.*

‘Whosoever shall hereafter separate themselves from the Communion of Saints, as it is approved by the Apostles Rules in the Church of *England*, and combine themselves together in a new Brotherhood, accounting the Christians who are conformable to the Doctrine, Government, Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, to be profane and unmeet for them to joyn with in Christian Profession; let them be excommunicated, and not restored, but by the Arch-bishop, after their Repentance, and publick Revocation of such their wicked Errors.

Here's the Nature of culpable Separation opened. 1. It is a Separation from the Communion of Saints. 2. Communion of Sains approved by the Apostles Rules. 3. Combination in a new Brotherhood. 4. The Reason of such Separation, and Combination, accounting the Christians who are conformable, &c. to be profane and unmeet for them to joyn with, in Christian Profession. The *Nonconformists* both of Denominations, Presbyterian and Congregational, do declare, 1. That they believe, and hold Communion of Saints. 2. That the Apostle's Rules are the Rules of that Communion. 3. That conforming Ministers and Christians are true Churches, a true and excellent part of the Catholick Church. 4. That they separate not from any Christians, because they are, or that are Christians conformable to the Doctrine, &c. There is not a conformable Christian in *England*, or in the whole World, but they that are sincere Christians among them, do and must hold Communion with them

in the Christian Profession. The Reason of their Combinations, is because of some Injunctions required of them alien from the Apostles Rules; as we are Christians, and keep to the Apostles Rules, they do not judg us to be unmeet for Christian Profession with them. As this is clear from the declared Doctrines of the *Nonconformists*, so it is clear in the Practice of many of them, as more than my self can testify, who have had of them, communicate in Prayer, Preaching and Sacraments with us. There may be some, who ignorantly, weakly and passionately, upon Prejudice and Unacquaintance, may be too far estranged from us, but as many of these as are Christians, dare not withdraw from Christian Communion with us; or judg us unmeet for Christian Profession with them; these are to be pittied and rectified; but if they believe with the Heart, and confess with the Mouth Jesus Christ; the Schism is verbal and oral, but not fundamental, and in the Heart. A Man may be shy of another Man's Company, through Unacquaintance and Suspicion, but if he will not keep the same Pace, or the same Track in the way to Heaven, I'll own him for a Fellow-Traveller, if I see him go on in the beaten Path of Christianity, tho not hand in hand with me. If he suspect me for a Robber, I'll assure him of my Honesty if I can, that we have the Comfort of good Company. There are not so many that declare themselves bound for Heaven, that I must cut off them that do; because we have some Jars and Disputations upon our Journey—. Let us learn Moderation from the highest Fathers of the Church in their days, and learn this *Canonical Notion* of a Schismatick. A Schismatick from the Church, is, *He that separates from the Communion of Saints, according to the Apostles Rules, as from Christians unmeet for Christian Profession, because they conform; i. e. as from no Christians, but prophane, because they conform to the Doctrine, Government, and Ceremonies of the Church of England.*

Agreeable with this, is that Description of Schism given us by that clear and very learned Dr. Barnaby Potter, (*Answer to Charity mistaken*, Sect. 3. p. 76.) 'Whosoever professes himself to forsake the Communion of any one Member of the Body of Christ, must confess himself consequently to forsake the whole. And therefore her Communion we forsake not no more than the Body of Christ, whereof we acknowledge the Church of Rome a Member, tho corrupted. And this clears us from the Imputation of Schism, whose Property it is, (witness the *Donatists* and *Luciferians*) to cut off from the Body of Christ, and the hope of Salvation, the Church from which it separates.

I must confess, when the Jesuit-Knot frames an Argument from this Description of Schism; the Rational Mr. *Chillingworth*, denies the Syllogism; saying, it is all one as to prove, that because a Man hath a Feather, therefore

therefore he hath the Plague; and makes this to be but one Property of a Schism. But be it so, if this be a Vindication of the Protestants from being Schismaticks, because of our Separation from Rome; it will as clearly vindicate our Protestant *Nonconformists* from the charge of Schism, from the Established Church, for they do not cut off from the Body of Christ and hope of Salvation, the Church of *England*. Indeed, the Separation with which they are charged, is not from it, as from a Church, but as Separation in a Church, fundamentally and essentially the same, but differing in Accidents and Modes, which must needs be the lowest kind of Difference, and not comparable to that in *Corinth*; which our Famous Dr. *Rainolds* (*De Lib. Apocryphis Praelect.* 1.) calls only *Schisma nascens*; for the *Conformists* and *Nonconformists* are all one in Christ; none of the *Nonconformists* have been ever heard to divide, and cry, *I am of Paul, and I am of Apollo, &c.* Our imposed Accidents are the dividing things among us. And certainly, if the *Nonconformists* do sin grievously, in refusing Communion with us in them, agreeing in all the Parts of Christian Catholick Communion with us; It will be a remarkable Act of Charity and Goodness in our Governours to deliver them from so great a Sin, by reducing the fore-quoted Doctrine of our Church, in the Homily of Fasting, into Practice; for those be the things, at which they stumble, it will be a Charity to take them out of the way: Or if they will not remove them, then I'll conclude, it is hard to call them Schismaticks, who are all one with us, as far as we are all one with all Reformed and Christian Churches, remembring the Words of the Learned Dr. *Stillington*, in his Defence of Arch-bishop *Laud*; *Before the imposing Humour came into particular Churches, Schism was defined by the Fathers and others, to be a voluntary Departure out of the Church; yet that cannot in Reason be understood of any particular, but the true Catholick Church.*

Pag. 359.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 1. line 10. dele *to me*. P. 4. l. 21. after *&c.* add *which*. P. 5. l. 21. after *Bishops*, add *and dele And* P. 8. l. 32. del. *that*. P. 9. l. 16. del. *only*. l. 37. r. *Church-Order*. Ib. v. for. P. 10. r. of the *National*, &c. P. 11. l. 18. after *Country*, add *they are unfit*. P. 15. l. 4. r. 166. P. 24. l. 40. for *they*, r. *we*. P. 26. l. 4. r. *disposivē*. l. 29. r. *Anti-reforming*. P. 31. Marg. r. *are*, for *is*. P. 39. l. 40. r. *is*. P. 40. l. 15. r. *Preachers*. P. 57. l. 10. after *Order*, add 1.

The Preface, and some other Sheets the Author did not revise; therefore the Printer desires the Reader to correct, or pardon what *Errata* he finds therein.